PROD. #135050

"SPARKLE"

by

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FINAL DRAFT

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"SPARKLE"

FADE IN:

1 EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING, HARLEM - SUNDAY MORNING 1

The sun sparkles on a broken window pane. Somewhere a young girl hums a sweet song.

2 INT. TENEMENT HALL 2

While humming a thirteen year old black girl descends the shabby staircase. She is SPARKLE ANDERSON.

3 EXT. STREET 3

Still on her feet she skips out onto the dirty street and begins to jump rope. We TRAVEL with her feet to the corner where the SHOT WIDENS and we see four girls operating double jump-ropes as other girls "jump in". One of the girls "jumping in" is DOLORES ANDERSON. Behind the girls we can see boxers jumping rope in a store front gymnasium. An energetic black boy brings water to the athletes. He is STIX WARREN. Through the reflection on the window we see another girl moving to another rhythm across the street. SISTER ANDERSON dances to "ash can" bongos and delights the neighborhood boys. As she dances we can see a young black boy running wildly down the street. The police follow in close pursuit. The boy ducks past Sister and into an alley and over a fence. He is LEVI BROWN. As the SHOT CONTINUES to WIDEN we see Levi join a group playing basketball in a schoolyard and elude the police. The SHOT CONTINUES to WIDEN as the MUSIC and RHYTHMS BUILD. The CAMERA PULLS WIDE to show the Harlem street scene and the TITLES appear here.

4 INT. CHURCH 4

Our five principals -- Sparkle, Dolores, Sister, Levi and Stix -- sing in the Baptist choir. Levi only has eyes for Sister. They sing "Precious Lord".

5 EXT. FRONT STEPS OF ANDERSON TENEMENT - DUSK 5

It is later that day. Sparkle, Dolores, Sister, Stix and Levi fool around singing on the steps. It is crude and amateur but their voices are strong and good. Sister is less interested than the others.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 5

STIX
Come on, Sister... Come on, are we gonna sing or what?

SPARKLE
We gonna sing, Stix...

They begin again. Stix glares at Sister. Reluctantly she begins... Their voices sound good together -- especially with Sister's.

6 THIRD STORY WINDOW 6

EFFIE, the girls' mother, leans out.

EFFIE
Come on, girls, it's almost dark. I don' want you hangin' round them steps. Come upstairs to your own house.

SISTER
It ain't even dark yet.

EFFIE
Just get on up here and don't sass me, Miss.

7 INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN 7

Shabby but neat. Effie comes in from the window and continues to iron as she talks with a neighborhood friend, MRS. WATERS.

EFFIE
Honestly, I can't see why those girls spend so much time out there in the street.

MRS. WATERS
Only a good friend could say what I'm about to say to you, Effie. And you might say right back to me, "It ain't none of your business, Miz Waters," but I think you better keep your eye on that oldest gal of yours. She's bustin' at the seams.

EFFIE
Sister? She jus' high spirited. Always has been, takes after her father.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 7

The door opens to the apartment now and the three girls walk into the kitchen. Sister leads.

MRS. WATERS
(a quick change of tune)
Why, Sister, don't you look pretty tonight.

SISTER
(no love lost between them)
You here again?

EFFIE
You mind your manners, young lady. Sparkle, you take off that dress right now and, Dolores, you done your homework?

DOLORES
Almost.

EFFIE
Almost ain't done.
(to Sister)
How 'bout yours, young lady?

Sparkle takes her dress off.

SISTER
All done.

EFFIE
(suspicious)
Let me see it.

Effie takes the dress from Sparkle and moves back to the ironing board. Sister and Sparkle go down the hall to their bedroom. Dolores comes over to Effie and takes the iron just as Effie is about to pick it up.

DOLORES
Don' iron our clothes, Mama. We old enough to iron for ourselves. You do enough ironin' for those people you work for. You ain't our maid.

Effie is hurt by this. She takes the iron from Dolores' hand.

EFFIE
I enjoy ironing clothes for those I love.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2) 7

DOLORES
And I suppose you love them fat ass honkey Jews out there on Long Island you work for?

EFFIE
Hush your mouth. Go get your homework right now 'fore I give you this iron in a place you won't forget. Honestly, I don't know who teaches you such things.

Dolores leaves and walks down the long hall. Behind her we can HEAR Mrs. Waters in the kitchen.

MRS. WATERS
Ain't right her talkin' to you like that... all you done for those girls...

8 THE GIRLS' BEDROOM 8

SISTER
Shit that Missus Waters is a trouble maker.

DOLORES
How come we have to call her Misses Waters all the time? Even Mama.

SPARKLE
Mama says one time she the only married woman on the block and she don't want no one to forget it.

NOISE outside the window; whistles, calls for Sister. Sister kneels across the bed and pokes her head out the window.

SISTER
Who's that?

9 HER POV 9

A tough black leather jacketed black BOY around eighteen. He stands in the debris-filled lot.

BOY
Your lover boy, honey.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 9

SISTER
Don't you wish, Willie Jones? Get away from here 'fore I call the cops.

WILLIE
You call the cops and how am I gonna take you to the movies tonight?

SISTER
What movies?

WILLIE
(he knows her weaknesses)
Oh, nothin' special jus' "The Wild One" with Marlon Brando.

SISTER
That a dollar twenny five per person; you jivin' me?

WILLIE
No, come on down.

She hesitates.

SISTER
Let me see the money first.

He shows her the money.

SISTER
(continuing)
I'll be right down.

She comes in from the window.

DOLORES
Mama ain't gonna let you go to no movies Sunday night.

SISTER
You hush your mouth. Ain't none of your concern.

She fixes herself in a small mirror.

SISTER
(continuing)
Ain't no way this gal's gonna miss Mr. Marlon "S for Sexy" Brando.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (2) 9

She takes her school books and walks to the kitchen. Sparkle and Dolores follow but far behind so they can eavesdrop.

10 KITCHEN 10

SISTER
Mama I found some real hard stuff I don't know how to do. I'm goin' over to my friend Irene Lopez' house. She's real smart in geometry and she'll help me.

EFFIE
Who's this Irene Lopez?

SISTER
You heard me talk about Irene Lopez, Mama. She's real smart.

11 SPARKLE AND DOLORES 11

listening.

DOLORES
(sotto voce to Sparkle)
Hope Mama never meet up with Irene Lopez, they give her shit for brains.

12 BACK TO SCENE 12

EFFIE
I don't know.

SISTER
Come on, Mama, you always sayin' you wan' me to get good grades and all.

Effie thinks a minute.

EFFIE
You be home soon, you hear?

SISTER
(excited now)
I will.
(fake sweetness)
Goodnight, Missus Waters.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 12

Sister leaves.

MRS. WATERS
I know trouble when I sees trouble.

13 ANOTHER PART OF HARLEM - NIGHT 13

Later that evening. Levi and Stix walk together.

STIX
I know we could start a group.

LEVI
You think we could make some money?

STIX
I know it.

They reach a corner. Cars are stopped for a red light. Levi goes over to the first parked car.

LEVI
(to the driver)
Hey, Mister, help a fella out. How 'bout a quarter?

The driver rolls up his window. Levi runs to the next car; as he does he yells to Stix.

LEVI
(continuing)
How much money?

STIX
Lots of money, more than we've ever seen.

LEVI
(at the second car)
Hey, man, how 'bout some change?

The second driver and his wife lock their doors. Levi goes on to a third car where a large woman in a low-cut dress sits.

LEVI
(continuing)
Save a boy from stealin', ma'am; give me a quarter.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 13

He gets lucky; she hands him some change.

LEVI
(continuing; smiling)
God bless you and your beautiful tits.

The traffic starts up. Levi joins Stix.

LEVI
(continuing)
Did you see the pair on that old babe, man?

STIX
All we gotta do to be a group is rehearse.

LEVI
Rehearse? Shit, I gotta hustle man and get me some big money fast for my woman.

STIX
Who's your woman?

LEVI
The most beautifyin' and knockin' outest Miss Sister Anderson.

STIX
You crazy? She ain't ever gonna be your woman.

LEVI
That's what you think, "Mr. Smart Ass, Holding Down Ten Jobs A Week and Makin' Chicken Shit". I'll be a big man and she'll be my woman.

STIX
You be a big man if we start our group.

LEVI
Sounds too much like work to me.

STIX
Jus' think about it.

They come to another corner.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2) 13

LEVI
I'll see you, man.

He walks off.

STIX
Levi. Jus' think about it.

LEVI
(yelling as he walks)
Sorry, baby, can't think about nothin' but my woman.

14 EXT. BUILDING 14

Levi turns a corner and enters an old building with "Condemned" signs hanging on it.

15 INT. OLD BUILDING 15

Levi enters and climbs a dark staircase. When he reaches the top a figure jumps out of the dark and grabs him.

LEVI
(scared for a second, then recognizing his assistant)
It's me, Crazy Man Kelly, Levi Brown.

The insane bum shows a glimmer of recognition as he eases his grip.

LEVI
(continuing)
It's okay, Crazy Man, ain't nobody gonna touch your rags or nothin'.

Slowly Crazy Man Kelly lets go and shuffles back to a darkened room. ANOTHER BUM comes from out of the shadows of another room. He holds an old Coke bottle filled with clear liquid.

OTHER BUM
Hey, Levi, you wanna buy a taste?

LEVI
No, man. Won't have a hair lef' on my head if I drink that stuff.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 15

The Other Bum laughs as Levi climbs the stairs to another landing.

16 A SMALL ROOM 16

Here is an abandoned room Levi has made a temporary place for himself. He rolls up his jacket and makes it a pillow. Taking the newly acquired change from his pants pocket, he tucks it into his crotch for safekeeping. He lies down on the floor.

LEVI
Goodnight, Sister. Any day girl I'm gonna make you mine.

how is this read?

17 INT. ANDERSON GIRLS' BEDROOM - MORNING 17

Dolores and Sparkle sleep as Effie opens the door. Sparkle opens her eyes.

EFFIE
Where's Sister?

SPARKLE
(a quick lie)
She got up and went to school real early, Mama.

Their eyes meet. They both know it's a lie.

EFFIE
(closing the door)
Your lunch money's on the table.

18 and 19 OMITTED 18 and 19

Subway & Free school.

20 INT. KITCHEN OF GERBER HOUSE - BAYSIDE, LONG ISLAND 20

Effie enters. LEE GERBER, an attractive woman in her late thirties, sits drinking Nescafe.

LEE
Good morning, Effie.

EFFIE
Good morning, Miz Gerber. You up early this morning.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 20

LEE
I can't sleep too good with Mr. Gerber away.

Effie hangs up her sweater in the kitchen closet and starts putting on an apron.

EFFIE
When he comin' back, from that place?

LEE
Cuba?

EFFIE
That's right, Cuba. What's he doin' down there so long?

Effie moves to the dishwasher and starts emptying it.

LEE
(a little uneasy)
Some kind of business. God knows.

She gets up from the table, takes her cup and saucer and washes them out at the sink. She watches Effie as she does this.

LEE
(continuing)
Is anything wrong, Effie?

EFFIE
No, Miz Gerber.

LEE
We've known each other a long time, Effie.

EFFIE
Six years.

LEE
I hope that if the time should ever come that you would need someone to talk to, you would consider me enough of a friend.

EFFIE
You're a good person, Miz Gerber.

20A INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - LATER 20A

Dolores and Sparkle dress as the front door opens. Sister enters and walks down the hall toward them.

DOLORES
Where you been all night?

SISTER
Leave me alone, I'm tired.

SPARKLE
But what about school?

SISTER
(as the door closes)
Fuck school.

21 EXT. RECORD STORE WINDOW - DAY 21

Stix stares at a poster advertising free passes to a Rock and Roll Show. He enters the store.

22 INT. RECORD STORE 22

SHIMMY DODSON, the owner, unpacks a carton as Stix races in.

SHIMMY
You're late.

STIX
You play a number yet today, Shimmy?

SHIMMY
How can I play a number when there's no one here to watch the store while I use the phone down to the corner?

STIX
I'm late 'cause I was havin' this here dream and I didn't want to wake myself.

SHIMMY
Yeah, yeah, just unpack this box.

STIX
And in this dream I seen this blinding flash.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 22

SHIMMY
Just unpack the box.

STIX
And in the middle of that blinding flash of light were... were... THREE NUMBERS!

Shimmy is interested now.

SHIMMY
You dream three numbers last night?

STIX
Uh huh.

SHIMMY
Well, what was they? I just got time to call them in.

Shimmy goes to the cash register and gets some change for the phone.

STIX
What's that sign in the window, Shimmy?

SHIMMY
Fellas from Lotus Records here this mornin'. Gonna give free passes to the Brooklyn Paramount to the first ten people buy the "MoonLites" new album.

He closes the register and picks up a pad and pencil.

SHIMMY
(continuing)
Here, you write down the numbers for me.

STIX
Listen, Shimmy, what's it to Lotus Records if you only give away five passes?

SHIMMY
What you talkin' about?

STIX
Let me have five passes. I never asked you for no favors.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2) 22

SHIMMY
And you ain't supposed to, you is an employee. Now what's those numbers, boy?

Stix picks up the pencil and is about to write. Suddenly he grimaces and reaches for his head.

STIX
Oooooh... ooooooooh.

SHIMMY
What's the matter?

STIX
I'm havin' a memory attack. The numbers jus' flew right outta my head.

SHIMMY
Well, they better fly right back in there.

STIX
Funny thing about my memory attack. Got a feelin' only one thing gonna cure it. Or should I say only five things gonna cure it.

23 OMITTED 23

24 INT. THEATRE 24

The crowd is restless until the movie ends and the "Rock and Roll Show" begins. Sparkle, Stix, Dolores and Levi and Sister sit in total awe and rapture as group after group performs.

25 EXT. HARLEM STREET - THAT NIGHT 25

Sparkle, Sister, Dolores, Stix and Levi walk toward the Anderson tenement. They are filled with excitement and energy from the show, especially Stix and Sister.

STIX
And then and then when they went.

He demonstrates a bit of choreography.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 25

SISTER
That chick, honey, when she come up and give it that shoulder. They ain't got no act without that chick. She so fine.

SPARKLE
You sing better than her any day.

DOLORES
(to Sparkle)
You up too late, girl.

They reach the front steps now. Levi comes up to Sister.

LEVI
She's right, you sing better than her any day.

Sister climbs up the steps.

SISTER
Bet she got men really know how to treat her.

LEVI
So do you.

SISTER
Bet she don't have to take no train home.

She walks into the building now. Dolores follows.

LEVI
(calling after her)
Goodnight, darlin'.

SPARKLE
Thanks, Stix, you were real fine to invite us all.

STIX
(more to Levi)
Don't you see, we could have a group like that?

SPARKLE
You and Sister could do anything. Levi, too.

LEVI
At least your family got one smart female.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2) 25

SPARKLE
Goodnight, Stix.

She looks at him, her heart pounding.

STIX
Goodnight.

26 INT. ANOTHER TENEMENT APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT 26

Stix enters. His GRANDMOTHER, a heavy-set woman in her seventies, nods in an old rocker. As the door opens she looks up.

GRAN
Hi, "Big Boy".

STIX
You sleepin', Gran?

GRAN
Jus' restin' my eyes. How was the show?

STIX
Oh, Gran, it was fine. Jus' fine. They had everybody who was everybody.

Stix kneels before her. She looks down at his shoes. The sole is flapping on one of them.

GRAN
Look at that shoe. Give it to me.

STIX
And there was this group, "The MoonLites" jus' like the group I wanna have.

Slowly Gran gets up from her chair. She has had arthritis in her legs so this is a painful experience for her.

STIX
(continuing)
You all right, Gran? How's your legs tonight?

GRAN
I'm jus' fine. Now let's see about this shoe.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 26

Stix follows her into the little kitchen. She opens a drawer and finds an icepick.

STIX
I'm gonna do that, Gran, I'm gonna have a group all my own.

She fixes the shoe by boring a hole through the top sole and tying the soles together.

GRAN
You gonna have everything you want, "Big Boy", 'cause you're the best.

STIX
And when I do, you're gonna be wearing diamonds and furs and I'll throw money at your feet.

GRAN
"Big Boy", don't you know you're diamonds and furs for me. What an old woman like me care for fancy stuff when the Lord give her this fine grandson to make her so proud?

STIX
You ain't no old woman.

Gleefully he grabs her and leads her in a little dance. She resists at first, then goes a step or two, but her legs hurt her and she must sit down in a nearby chair. Stix has been humming "Georgia". As Gran sits down, he kneels at her feet and keeps the song going. Gran sings with him.

27 EXT. HARLEM STREET - DAY 27

Levi and Sister walk together.

SISTER
This better be somethin' that's worth my time and trouble.

LEVI
Would I lie to you, Sugar?

SISTER
I mus' be crazy to come over here with you, oughta have my head...

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 27

They turn a corner now and come upon an alley. Parked in the alley is a shiny Cadillac.

SISTER
Where you get that?

LEVI
Friend o' mine loan it to me.

She moves closer to the car.

SISTER
Since when you got such friends?

LEVI
I know this is gonna come as a terrible shock to you, girl, but there are some things you don't know.

SISTER
You stole it.

LEVI
Sugar, you is the most suspicious woman I ever met. Go ahead, get in.

28 INT. CAR 28

They get in.

LEVI
Feel the leather, ain't it soft? Almost as soft as you.

He moves closer and grabs her.

SISTER
(pushing him off)
Keep your hands to yourself.

LEVI
Aw, Sugar, come on. You know I'm dyin' of love for you.

SISTER
Where you get this car, Levi Brown?

LEVI
It's only the beginning.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: 28

SISTER
The beginning of what?

LEVI
The beginning of you and me.

SISTER
The shortest story known to mankind.

LEVI
Goddammit, woman, I get you this fine car and tell you I'm crazy about you and what else do you want?

SISTER
The "Big Time".

LEVI
You're sittin' next to it.

She starts to laugh at him but she isn't sure.

LEVI
(continuing)
Give me a kiss.

Reluctantly she does.

LEVI
(continuing)
Open your mouth.

She resists. He grabs her hair and forces her to open her mouth. He is violent and she capitulates. She seems to almost enjoy the violence. He tears at her blouse.

SISTER
Wait.

LEVI
I waited too long already.

SISTER
You gotta get something from the drugstore before we go any further.

LEVI
I been to the drugstore.

He kisses her again, forcing her down in the seat.

29 EXT. ROOFTOP CONNECTING SPARKLE AND STIX' BUILDINGS - LATE AFTERNOON 29

Stix plays his harmonica soulfully as Sparkle opens the door to the roof and steps out. She carries a large straw basket and begins to take down the wash from a clothesline as she sneaks looks toward Stix who hasn't noticed her yet. A piece of clothing gets caught in the wind and as it tumbles across the roof Stix catches it.

STIX
Here, let me help you.

SPARKLE
You play jus' fine.

STIX
Workin' out ideas for when we start our group.

Sparkle takes down a sheet. Stix helps her. The wind wraps them in the sheet. This brings them closer.

STIX
(continuing)
You smell real good, Sparkle.

SPARKLE
I used some of Sister's cologne.

STIX
You look real fine, too.

SPARKLE
Sister fix my hair this mornin'.

They fold the sheet together.

STIX
How come you always talkin' 'bout your sister?

SPARKLE
'Cause she so fine and I love her so much and I wanna be jus' like her.

STIX
But what about you?

SPARKLE
What about me what?

STIX
How old are you now?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: 29

SPARKLE
Fifteen.

STIX
You sure are pretty... for a girl.

He teases her. She is embarrassed and frightened.

SPARKLE
I gotta go.

STIX
You ever been kissed?

He kisses her gently.

SPARKLE
Don't.

He finishes the kiss and goes for another.

SPARKLE
(continuing)
Don't.

He kisses her again. This time she turns away.

STIX
Why?

SPARKLE
It's a sin.

STIX
Does it feel like a sin?

He kisses her again. She goes with it this time.

SPARKLE
Feels so good it must be a sin.
I gotta go.

STIX
No you don't.

SPARKLE
I do, I promised Sister I'd straighten her hair tonight.

He laughs.

SPARKLE
(continuing)
I did, I promised, Stix.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2) 29

STIX
Okay, baby, then you better go now.

Sparkle leaves. Stix walks slowly back to his side of the roof. He puts his harmonica to his lips and starts a love song.

30 INT. THE GIRLS' BEDROOM - LATER 30

Sister sits in front of her mirror with a towel around her torso reading a movie magazine. Behind her, Sparkle straightens her hair with Posner's Hair Straightener. Dolores watches from her bed. TUNE ANN CHAMBERS, a fat teenage friend who giggles constantly, helps Sparkle.

DOLORES
Why you put that shit on you for?

SISTER
Wouldn't hurt you to get a little glamour, honey.

Sister holds up the movie magazine.

SISTER
(continuing)
Don't see no kink on Miss Marilyn "S for Sexy" Monroe, do you?

DOLORES
Miss Marilyn Monroe is a honkey. Put that shit on your hair. It's unnatural... It's unnatural...

Tune Ann giggles.

SPARKLE
(to Sister)
Hold still, you wan' me to get this in your eye?

DOLORES
(to Sparkle)
And you, Miss Goody Two Shoes. Miz Waters tell me she seen you up on the roof with Stix.

Tune Ann giggles.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: 30

SPARKLE
Nothin' wrong with me talkin' to Stix Warren on this here roof.

DOLORES
Heard you was doin' more than talkin'.

Sister gets interested now.

DOLORES
(continuing)
Heard you was messin'.

SPARKLE
Ain't true.

DOLORES
Is so.

SPARKLE
(louder)
Ain't.

SISTER
Shut your mouths up, want Mama to hear and ask you all what you're talkin' 'bout? You wanta tell her?

The two girls calm down a bit.

SISTER
(continuing)
Nothin' wrong with messin', girls, jus' make sure whoever you're messin' with stop down to the drugstore first and take care of business. Don' you come cryin' 'round here big belly sayin' you didn't know what you supposed to do. You hear me, Spark?

SPARKLE
(embarrassed)
Uh huh.

SISTER
No sense you all givin' it away either. Pick out somebody got enough in his pockets stop down to the Busch jewelers down to a Hundred Twenny-Fifth Street. Pick up somethin' nice for you.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (2) 30

She lifts up her hand and displays a cheap ring.

SISTER
(continuing; proudly)
See what Levi got me.

Dolores gets up and comes over now.

DOLORES
Levi Brown? Who you kiddin'?

SISTER
Cost seventeen dollars. Real diamond, only a chip, but a real diamond.

DOLORES
Levi Brown, who hustles for nickels?

SPARKLE
About time Levi got some good luck.

DOLORES
Mighty small stone.

31 EXT. HARLEM DRUGSTORE - DAY 31

Stix goes into drugstore as Sparkle nervously waits outside.

32 INT. GERBER DINING ROOM - SATURDAY NIGHT 32

The Gerbers and eight guests are having a noisy celebration in their "French Provincial" dining room. Effie, in a uniform, serves. Lee Gerber is flashily dressed as is her husband MOE a jovial heavy set man in his forties. The rest of the guests are flashy and overdressed and certainly not legitimate businessmen.

MOE
... then he says to Benny Palmieri, "I only got two left!"

Everyone at the table breaks up. After a moment, one of the men, a short balding ITALIAN, smoking a Cuban cigar, stands up. He waves his hands for silence.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 32

ITALIAN MAN
Great story, Moe... but seriously, folks, let's have a toast now to our host and hostess for bein' so gracious. Moe and Lee, you're both the tops. And to the forming of our new partnership and its success.
(he lifts his glass)
Americus Enterprises.

Cheers and everyone drinks.

MOE
Hey, Effie, more champagne.

EFFIE
Yes, Mr. Gerber.

33 INT. ANDERSON SISTERS' BEDROOM - SAME SATURDAY NIGHT 33

The first spring night and the window is open. The girls seem older now, especially Sparkle. Sister, in a pointed bra and half slip, pulls on her stockings. She is more beautiful than ever. A new RADIO on the beat-up chest of drawers plays "You're Lookin' Good" by Lloyd Price. Dolores eyes the radio.

DOLORES
Where'd that radio come from?

SISTER
M.Y.O.B. Spark, hand me my dress.

Sparkle takes down an orange dress that hangs on the door.

DOLORES
It's nice, when Mama ain't aroun' to do your maid work, you always got Sparkle.

SISTER
You are the orneriest gal I ever had the misfortune to meet up with. Hand me that belt, Miss Ornery.

DOLORES
I think two in-help is enough for any woman.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: 33

She walks out of the room. Sparkle zips Sister up.

SISTER
What's wrong with her, anyway? She is sure some sour puss.

SPARKLE
Stix says Dolores is a very serious thinker.

Sister looks in the mirror.

SISTER
Saturday night ain't no time for serious thinkin'. How do I look?

SPARKLE
(filled with admiration)
Jus' fine.

SISTER
You wanna come with me, or you gonna wait aroun' all night for "you know who"?

Sister douses herself in cheap cologne.

SPARKLE
Stix busy with business. He'll be by later.

SISTER
Wastin' your life waitin' on that man. Ain't nothin' on his mind BUT business. Bye, sugar. You play the radio.

SPARKLE
Have a good time.

34 THE STREET - NIGHT 34

Saturday night in Harlem. The street is alive with action. The Lloyd Price song "You're Lookin' Good" continues somewhere from a RADIO. Sister hits the street and basks in the aliveness of it all. She looks good, and she knows it. Mrs. Waters leans on a pillow at her window sill as usual taking it all in.

35 EXT. THE BROOKLYN PARAMOUNT 35

A big crowd waits in line for a midnight Rock and Roll Show. Sister walks up to the line, but this time she walks right past it and to the Stage Door. All of this is still to "You're Lookin' Good".

36 INT. ANDERSON GIRLS' BEDROOM 36

Sparkle waits alone as she HEARS a knock at the door.

SPARKLE
Stix...

The door opens, and it is Levi, all duded up and carrying some flowers.

SPARKLE
(continuing)
Hi, Levi...

LEVI
Hi, baby...

He enters the kitchen now and looks around.

LEVI
(continuing)
Where's Sister...

SPARKLE
Gone...

LEVI
What do you mean gone...? She and me got a date tonight... Where'd she go?

SPARKLE
She musta forgot, Levi...

LEVI
Where'd she go...?

37 INT. BACKSTAGE - PARAMOUNT 37

Sister watches LLOYD PRICE sing "You're Lookin' Good" from the wings full of the excitement of being part of this. A smooth-looking BLACK MAN in black tie comes up behind her and kisses her on the neck.

SMOOTH BLACK MAN
Hi, baby.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: 37

SISTER
Hi, yourself.

SMOOTH BLACK MAN
How come you so late?

SISTER
I ain't late. You ain't gone on yet, have you?

SMOOTH BLACK MAN
Just about to.

He is joined now by THREE OTHER MEN in black tie and a pretty BLACK GIRL with red hair. They are all part of a singing group.

SMOOTH BLACK MAN
(continuing; to the group)
You all remember Sister.

MALE MEMBERS OF GROUP
Hi, Sister. What'd you say, babe? How you doin'?

The red-haired singer pays no attention to Sister. She adjusts her sequin-covered dress. Sister watches all this with envy.

SISTER
I'm doin' jus' fine.

38 ON STAGE 38

Lloyd Price has finished, and the APPLAUSE and SHOUTING is just dying down.

EMCEE
And now the bossest boss group you ever heard. From Blue Jay Records, the incomparable, and I know you gonna not know what hit you, "The Satinaires."

The audience goes wild. The Satinaires take center stage and begin their song. From the wings we can see Sister watching the Girl Singer with chills and envy.

39 EXT. PARAMOUNT 39

Levi makes his way to the stage door through the mob.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: 39

The doors swing open as the Satinaires leave, body-guards protecting them through the mob. The door opens again, and now Sister emerges accompanied by the Smooth Black Man. The crowd goes wild, and Sister is pushed to a waiting limousine with her companion as Levi watches from far back in the crowd.

40 EXT. SHIMMY DODSON'S RECORD STORE 40

Stix is locking up as Levi talks to him.

LEVI
You still wanta start that group?

STIX
More than ever.

LEVI
Let's do it.

STIX
(very excited)
Great. We start rehearsin' tomorrow. You know old Simmons Hall over on Columbus? They have amateur contests there every Friday night.

Stix talks on and on as they walk into the night. He is very excited.

41 EXT. ANDERSON ROOF - NIGHT 41

Sparkle waits for Stix. She looks around. No Stix in sight. Sadly she leaves the roof.

42 OMITTED 42

43 INT. SIMMONS HALL 43

Inside the smoke-filled hall, two clumsy BLACK TWIN SISTERS attempt a fan dance on a makeshift platform. The all-black audience drinks beer and relates directly to the performers. In this case, it is mostly un-favorable. They mock the girls.

44 DRESSING ROOM 44

In a seedy dressing area that consists of three walls and a curtain, Sparkle, Sister, Dolores, Stix and Levi are getting ready to go on. They are all very nervous.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 44

STIX
Don't forget now. After we do "dowee do wee" three times, go back to the beginning.

LEVI
I remember, done nuthin' else for one week, but practice it.

Sister stuffs Dolores' blouse with tissues.

SISTER
Hold still, will you, DoDo!

DOLORES
It ain't natural... It ain't natural.

SISTER
How you 'spect people gonna look at you, if you ain't givin' them somethin' to look at?

DOLORES
I must be crazy, lettin' all you crazy people talk me into this. Crazy.

Sparkle tries to put lipstick on. She is so nervous her hand shakes. Stix comes up to her.

STIX
You okay, baby?

SPARKLE
(scared to death)
I'm okay.

45 ON STAGE 45

The clumsy fan dancers finish. The audience is unenthusiastic. The Master of Ceremonies runs out. He is a flashy, funny man named BUBBLES SWEENY.

BUBBLES
The lovely Norton Sisters, folks. Confidentially, folks, look to me more like the "Cookie Sisters". You all heard of the "Cookie Sisters", ain't you? "Lorna Doone and Nothin' Doone."

The audience breaks up.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: 45

BUBBLES
(continuing)
Well, how you all "doone" out there? Now I want all you young ladies to put your money...
(pats his chest)
... right up here in "Titty City", 'cause the rats is a crawlin' tonight.

More LAUGHTER. Someone hands him a piece of paper from o.s. He reads it.

BUBBLES
(continuing)
Maybelle Reese from the Paradise Hotel, there's a phone call for you out to the desk.

A fat black girl in the audience indicates the phone call is for her and goes off.

BUBBLES
(continuing; watching her leave)
Bye, dear. Hear she told a sailor the other night he had a very small organ. Sailor say "Didn' know I was gonna play in a cathedral."

Audience loves it.

BUBBLES
(continuing)
Let's see now, who's our next contestant?

A funny-looking black GIRL with hennaed hair and rhinestone glasses comes from the wings.

BUBBLES
(continuing)
Hello, dear, and what's your name?

GIRL
Doreen Baker.

BUBBLES
Doreen Baker, lovely name. And what are you gonna do for us, dear?

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2) 45

GIRL
I'm gonna sing.

BUBBLES
You gonna sing. And what are you gonna sing?

GIRL
I'm gonna sing "Lucky Lips".

BUBBLES
"Lucky Lips". Well, honey, with that face you better have somethin' lucky on it.

The audience SHRIEKS.

BUBBLES
(continuing)
Only kiddin', darlin'. Please, folks, Miss Doreen Baker.

Bubbles leaves the stage, rolling his eyes. The band: a piano, sax and drums gives her an INTRODUCTION. She begins to sing. She is awful. The audience SNIGGERS and BOOS.

46 DRESSING ROOM 46

Bubbles shouts through the curtain.

BUBBLES
You kids on right now.

STIX
She jus' begun.

BUBBLES
Gonna give her the hook.

SPARKLE
(cold terror)
The hook!

47 ON STAGE 47

Suddenly, a big wooden hook comes out and pulls Doreen Baker o.s. The audience loves this and APPLAUDS. Bubbles puts down the hook as Stix runs up to him.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 47

STIX
You jus' announce us. Then we'll come out.

Bubbles races onstage.

BUBBLES
(calming down the audience; they're still laughing)
Now, now, we all God's children. We all God's children. Next, folks, some neighborhood kids got together and started a new group. And so without further ado, here they are. That sensational new singing group... "THE FARTS".

The audience collapses. Stix is furious. He yells from the wings.

STIX
"The Hearts"... "The Hearts".

BUBBLES
Oh, yes, "The Hearts". Here they are, folks, "The Hearts".

Stix signals the piano player. He plays a few notes and then the group runs on stage. The audience is still laughing.

The group goes into their number. It is a fast, energetic song. They are crude and not polished, but their voices are strong, and they are very good. Sister is the star, the audience loves her.

48 EXT. TENEMENT ROOF - LATER THAT NIGHT 48

Sparkle and Stix stand on the roof. Stix holds a tacky loving cup they have won. It is filled with dollar bills. Stix is very excited.

STIX
Did you hear them? Did you hear they yell "More, More" -- Why, if we'da been prepared, we coulda sung all night for 'em.

Sparkle touches the cup.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: 48

SPARKLE
First prize... who woulda thought.

STIX
I woulda thought. Didn't I tell you we could do it? It's jus' the beginnin'.
(puts his hand in the cup)
We gonna use this here prize money to buy us an arrangement. Maybe even have enough to buy you girls some red dresses. You'll see we're goin' places now.

SPARKLE
You can do anything, Stix. Anything.

STIX
Did you see them when Sister come down stage and give them her stuff?
(laughs)
They'd like to pee in their pants.

SPARKLE
She sure was fine.

STIX
You were great, too, baby.

SPARKLE
Didn't do nothin'.

STIX
You look so pretty...

SPARKLE
(very shy)
You probably got a lot of things to do...

STIX
But I like bein' here with you...

SPARKLE
(thrilled, but shy)
You do?

STIX
You the sweetest gal I've ever known 'cept my ole Gran... She's my number one gal... But you is sure number two...

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2) 48

He tries to kiss her. Sparkle resists.

STIX
(continuing)
Don' be afraid...

Sparkle is unsure.

STIX
(continuing)
Don' be afraid. I won' hurt you...

They kiss. Sparkle is reluctant at first, then gives herself up to Stix.

STIX
(continuing; through the kiss)
Oh, sweet, sweet, baby...

The kiss becomes more passionate.

49 INT. ANDERSON LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 49

Sparkle cleans up a mess as the door opens, and Effie comes home from work.

SPARKLE
Hi, Mama.

EFFIE
Hardly recognize my own house; radios, phonographs, sheet music.

SPARKLE
We been rehearsin' all day again.

EFFIE
How's it goin'?

SPARKLE
Okay, but Stix and Sister fight somethin' awful.

EFFIE
Where your sisters?

SPARKLE
I don't know; they all had somethin' to do. Seems every since we won the contest, everybody so busy all the time.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: 49

Effie opens the closet and hangs up her coat.

EFFIE
Don' see Stix aroun' at night no more.

SPARKLE
Oh, Mama, he's real busy, you know, tryin' to get us in a club and all.

Effie rummages through a top shelf in the closet.

EFFIE
You miss him, honey?

SPARKLE
Well he has things to do. What you lookin' for, Mama?

EFFIE
Got something I wanna play for you. Never could till Stix brought over the phonograph.

Effie comes out of the closet with a small record in a brown envelope.

SPARKLE
What's that?

EFFIE
Record your Mama made twenty years ago.

SPARKLE
You made a record?

Effie slips the little disc onto the phonograph.

EFFIE
Oh, not like the kind you all wanta make. This here one cost twenty-five cents at Coney Island. Hope it still plays.

Effie turns on the machine and puts the needle on the record. It is very old and very scratchy. Effie sits down. Suddenly we HEAR her young voice.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (2) 49

EFFIE'S VOICE
"For my husband, Cornelius, on the occasion of our first year together."
(pause)

MAN'S VOICE
(in distance)
"Go ahead... go ahead."

Slowly she begins SINGING "You're My Everything". Her voice is young and sweet and full of love. Sparkle is very moved.

EFFIE
You see, honey, I know what it feels like with you and Stix. I know how you feel.

Sparkle hugs her mother. Her loneliness and fears about Stix sweep over her.

SPARKLE
Oh, Mama.

EFFIE
A man gotta do what he gotta do, child. But, don' you worry. You got God and the ability to sing to Him. You gonna be jus' fine.

The two women embrace.

50 EXT. AN ALLEY IN SPANISH HARLEM - NIGHT 50

A large crowd watches a cockfight. HAM WATSON, a flunkey for pimps, and Levi make their way through the excited crowd to a good looking, evil man who is dressed beautifully and very involved in the cockfight. This man is SATIN STRUTHERS.

SATIN
Come on, baby, come on.

Levi and Ham crouch next to Satin.

HAM
Satin, this here is Levi Brown I tol' you 'bout. He's lookin' for work.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED: 50

Satin's full attention is on a proud black rooster who tears and pecks ferociously at the other bird.

SATIN
Come on, baby, come on. Look at my bird. Look at my bird.

Satin's bird attacks relentlessly until the other bird lies dead. There are CHEERS and BOOS. Much money changes hands. Satin is a big winner. Levi is very impressed. Satin stands for everything Levi is attracted to. A PUERTO RICAN MAN holding a big rust-colored rooster shouts to Satin.

PUERTO RICAN MAN
Hey, Satin, your bird ready to fight mine, too?

SATIN
Any day, Spik.

HAM
Your bird can't fight again right away.

SATIN
Shut up.
(hands Ham a roll of money)
Jus' go lay all this money on the Spik's bird to win.

Ham understands. He starts to run off. Levi, seeing what a smart operator Satin is, wants to be in on the win. He stops Ham.

LEVI
Put five for me, too.

He hands Ham the five dollars, and Ham runs off.

SATIN
You're a smart kid. I never lose.

Ham places the bet, and the match begins. Satin's bird is ruffled, but seems to come to life when the new bird enters the ring. The birds go at each other wildly. Satin's bird immediately shows himself to be a tough match for his new opponent. Satin didn't expect this. Neither did Levi.

THE SPIK
Attack... attack...

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED: (2) 50

HAM
(returning)
That mother fuckin' bird gonna win again, and we gonna lose... we gonna lose.

The rust-colored rooster's claw gets caught in the fancy collar of Satin's bird.

THE SPIK
They stuck, they stuck.

He starts to climb into the ring.

SATIN
Don' you touch my bird, Spik.

The Spik backs off. Satin enters the ring. Quickly Satin palms a single edge razor blade in his gloved hand. He picks up his rooster and quicker than the eye can see slices the bird with the razor blade as he removes the fancy collar, sets the wounded bird back down and jumps out of the ring, deftly passing the bloody blade in his glove to Levi. In a matter of seconds the Spik's cock is the victor.

SATIN
(continuing)
I told you, I never lose.

51 EXT. STREET IN HARLEM - DAY 51

Levi and Stix walk together hurriedly.

LEVI
So you see, I can't be part of no singin' group; I got big contacts now. I got important stuff I gotta do.

STIX
(a slow burn)
Our group is important.

LEVI
Man, that's gonna take forever. I got contacts now gonna make me a rich man faster than I dreamed.

STIX
You owe your loyalty to the group.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

LEVI
Aw, come on man, you don' need me. I jus' stan' there and do "doowah doo wah" anyway. Stix, this is my big chance. You know how long I been waitin'.

They stop at the door to a posh club, The Shan Doo.

52 INT. SHAN DOO 52

Stix and Levi enter. Stix is furious with Levi. The garish nightclub is being cleaned. Stix approaches the cleaning man.

STIX
I have an appointment with Mr. Daniels.

The cleaning man points to a desk at the far end of the club. Stix and Levi walk toward it. A small, thin black MAN with a precise moustache and dressed very formally sits at the large desk. Behind him, in a far corner of the office, a white WOMAN, her skin powdered so white, she is almost luminous, sits combing out a white French poodle. She wears a mink stole and has white curly hair. She pays no attention to anything or anyone, just the poodle.

STIX
(continuing)
Mr. Daniels?

Daniels looks in his appointment book. He speaks with a clipped affected accent.

MR. DANIELS
Mr. Warren.

STIX
I come to see you about my act. Three girls and two...
(glares at Levi)
... one guy. "The Hearts"; greatest group you ever heard.

MR. DANIELS
Not looking for any groups, Mr. Warren. Too many groups in Harlem these days. My clientele is only interested in the special, not the ordinary.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: 52

STIX
This ain't no ordinary group.

MR. DANIELS
So sorry, Mr. Warren.

Stix looks at Levi; he is very disappointed. Reluctantly they turn to leave. Stix turns back.

STIX
How 'bout three girls? Three great girls. Sisters.

MR. DANIELS
Still a group, Mr. Warren.

LEVI
But you never seen girls like this. Sing so fine.

Levi takes out a photograph of Sister he always carries with him. Daniels is very interested.

52A CLOSE - PHOTO 52A

STIX
(sensing he has a fish on the line)
And they call her the ugly one.

MR. DANIELS
(thinks for a moment)
I'll let them sing one song next Saturday night.

53 INT. SHAN DOO - SATURDAY NIGHT 53

The club is packed. On stage a "Redd Foxx" type comic entertains.

54 DRESSING ROOM 54

The girls in matching red dresses talk with Stix.

STIX
Now you remember everything?

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: 54

SISTER
Will you get outta here and leave us alone?

STIX
Don't be nervous.

SISTER
You're the one makin' us nervous.

Sister puts the finishing touches on how Sparkle and Dolores look.

STIX
Don't rush when you get out there. Take all the time you want.

Aware of the building tension, Sparkle walks over to Stix and puts her arm through his.

SPARKLE
You go out front and wait. Don't you worry.

Stix leaves reluctantly.

SISTER
Let me see you all do that thing with your shoulders I showed you for the middle part.

Sparkle does a step and moves her shoulders ala Sister. Dolores stands and watches.

SISTER
(continuing; to Delores)
Well, DoDo, get your motor movin'.

DOLORES
Goin' out there and make fools of ourselves.

SISTER
All I wanna know from you is what you gonna do in the middle of the song, girl?

Reluctantly Dolores does the same step Sparkle did. Her heart is not in it.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (2) 54

SISTER
(continuing)
No, no, like this.

Sister does it now.

SISTER
(continuing)
Like this.

Dolores follows.

SISTER
(continuing)
That's it...

DOLORES
(not happy)
Makin' fools out of ourselves;
you'll see.

55 THE NIGHTCLUB 55

Stix paces nervously near the entrance. Levi enters with Satin Struthers and a pretty black girl with a fur coat on her shoulders, Levi shakes Stix' hand.

LEVI
Hey, baby, how you doin'? This is Satin Struthers I told you so much about. This here is Stix Warren. I bring him to see the girls.

Satin cases the room, ignoring Stix. Stix couldn't care less. Daniels approaches Satin.

MR. DANIELS
Satin, it's nice to see you again.

SATIN
(arrogantly)
Likewise... likewise.

Daniels leads the way to a front table and seats Satin and the girl. Levi is close behind. He turns back to Stix and makes a boxer's winning sign with both hands over his head.

56 ON STAGE 56

The black comic finishes. APPLAUSE, MUSIC. A black MASTER OF CEREMONIES comes on stage.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: 56

MASTER OF CEREMONIES
The super sensational Okey Dokey, ladies and gentlemen. In the past the Shan Doo has been privileged to share with you some of our new discoveries in the wonderful world of show business. Tonight is no exception.

The three girls adjust themselves nervously.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES
(continuing)
We would like to present for your enjoyment and entertainment now, the very lovely and talented "Sister and The Sisters".

Stix is right on top of the annoyed orchestra leader to make sure the tempo is right as the satin curtains part, and the girls step forward. They sing "I Can't Give Back The Love I Feel For You", they are sensational, especially Sister. The crowd is crazy about them, especially Satin.

57 THE DRESSING ROOM - LATER 57

Sister sits at the dressing table, but Sparkle and Dolores move excitedly around the room. Stix is so excited he jumps up and down over and over again.

STIX
I never seen anything like it in my whole life.

SPARKLE
They really liked us.

STIX
Liked you? Honey, great "mooga mooga" you had them by the hair of their "castinets".

He jumps up and down and grabs Sparkle and dances her around.

SISTER
Will you calm down, crazy man?

STIX
I gotta go see Daniels. He say to me...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: 57

STIX (cont'd)
(imitates Daniels' affected speech)
Mr. Warren, I'd like to have a discussion with you when you have a moment.

Stix dances to the door.

STIX
(continuing)
A moment? For you, Mr. Daniels, I got days, months, years...

As he goes to open the dressing room door, it is being opened from the other side by Levi, followed by Satin and the girl in the fur coat. Levi is very excited, also; he grabs Stix with affection.

STIX
(continuing)
Come on in, Levi; I got big business to do.

Stix rushes off. Levi runs over to Sister.

LEVI
Gal, you jus' the best thing I ever seen.
(remembers Dolores and Sparkle)
All you so fine.

He hugs Sister and tries to show his feelings. Sister is cold and stares at Satin as he stands in the doorway. Their eyes meet in her mirror.

SISTER
Why don' you introduce me to your friends?

Satin steps forward, now keeping his gaze on her in the mirror.

SATIN
Satin Struthers; enjoyed your performance very much.

SISTER
Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: (2) 57

SATIN
Some friends of mine givin' a party tonight. Thought you might like to go along with me. We could celebrate your success and get better acquainted.

MISS TAYLOR
(annoyed)
What do you mean; she goin' to the party with us?

SATIN
Excuse me, I must see Miss Taylor to a taxi.

MISS TAYLOR
A taxi!!!

Satin grabs her arm.

SATIN
Levi, will you help me escort Miss Taylor to a taxi?

Levi knows this is not a polite request. He is at Miss Taylor's side in a flash.

SATIN
(continuing; to Sister)
I'll wait for you outside.

MISS TAYLOR
You son of a bitch.

58 THE HALL 58

Satin and Levi walk outside with Miss Taylor into the hall. Satin closes the door.

MISS TAYLOR
(louder)
You son of a bitch.

Like lightning, Satin punches the girl in the stomach. As she collapses against Levi.

SATIN
Get her outta here. Oh...

He pulls the fur coat off her shoulders and hands it to Levi.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: 58

SATIN
(continuing)
... and hold onto this. It belongs to me... Go ahead, get her outta here, I said.

Levi walks the weeping and shocked girl down the dressing room hall toward the back exit as Satin, pleased with himself, lights a long narrow black cigar. Behind him, the door opens and Sister appears.

59 INT. LOBBY HOTEL THERESA - NIGHT 59

Stix is signing the register. Sparkle sits on a chair in the lobby waiting.

HOTEL CLERK
(reading register)
Mr. and Mrs. Thompson.
(looks at Stix suspiciously)
Where your luggage?

STIX
Jus' in town for a weddin'. Didn't plan to stay over.

CLERK
(eyeing Sparkle)
How old is Mrs. Thompson over there?

STIX
Eighteen.

The Clerk is sure Sparkle isn't eighteen.

CLERK
You got a marriage license?

Stix reaches for his wallet. He takes a five dollar bull and rolls it in his hand.

STIX
(palming the five to the Clerk)
Oh, yes, here it is.

60 HOTEL ROOM 60

The Bellboy has just let Stix and Sparkle in. He looks them over. Stix tips him. The boy leaves, and shuts the door.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: 60

SPARKLE
I ain't never been in a hotel room before.

STIX
Well, we gettin' too big to make love on the roof. Plus it's gettin' too cold.

Sparkle goes into the bathroom. She is filled with wonder.

SPARKLE (o.s.)
Look, Stix, they got the toilet wrapped up. And the glasses... and look, Cashmere Bouquet soap ... and, Stix...

She walks outside now into the room where Stix lies stretched out on the bed.

SPARKLE
Hi, Mr. Thompson.

STIX
Hi, Mrs. Thompson.

61 INT. SHAN DOO - NIGHT 61

Stix nervously waits by the front door. The doors open and Effie Anderson walks in accompanied by Mrs. Waters. Stix rushes over to Effie.

STIX
Effie. I didn't know you were comin' over tonight.

EFFIE
Jus' thought I'd come over and see what all the carryin' on was all about.

STIX
Why didn' you tell me, so I could a arranged a special table.

EFFIE
Jus' decided a few minutes ago to come down. I can sit anywhere.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: 61

MRS. WATERS
(always looking for trouble)
Of course, if you ain't got room for the mother of the stars.

STIX
Of course there's room.

He glares at Mrs. Waters and leads them to a table where Levi and Ham are sitting.

STIX
(continuing; to Levi)
Get up.

LEVI
We savin' these seats for Satin.

STIX
Effie's here.

Levi jumps up, he sees Effie now.

LEVI
Mrs. Anderson, glad to see you. Miz Waters.

Effie and Mrs. Waters sit down. Mrs. Waters snubs Levi. Levi makes them comfortable. Stix walks back to the front door. Ham follows.

HAM
Where Satin gonna sit now?

STIX
He can sit with them. Maybe asks for Sister's hand. Maybe share a reefer with Miz Waters.

62 DRESSING ROOM 62

Sparkle and Dolores are dressing as Sister enters.

DOLORES
Ain't got much time.

SPARKLE
Stix says real important record man comin' tonight.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: 62

Sister drops her coat and sits at the makeup mirror.

SPARKLE
(continuing)
Say he gonna try to get us to make a demo record. Say he gonna...

Sister removes her hat. There is a huge welt and black and blue marks on the side of her face.

SPARKLE
(continuing)
What happened to your face?

SISTER
It ain't nothin'.

DOLORES
That mother fucker do that to you?

SISTER
Keep your voice down. I had an accident.

DOLORES
You had an accident of the brain when you took up with that low life no 'count trash.

SISTER
Get outta here.

DOLORES
What?

SISTER
You heard me. Outside with your mouth.

DOLORES
This is my dressin' room, too.

Sister stands up now and glares at Dolores.

SISTER
I said get outta here, and I mean it.

Reluctantly, Dolores leaves. Sister sits down again and reaches for her makeup.

SISTER
(continuing)
Sparkle, I want you to help me.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2) 62

She pulls something out of her pocket. Sparkle goes to her sister's aid. Artfully Sister opens a small vial and scoops a tiny bit of white powder into her long red pinkie fingernail. She brings the nail up to her nostril and sniffs hard.

SPARKLE
What you doin'? Sister, what is that?

SISTER
Hush -- child.
(smiling through her tears)
Your sister can't fly on one wing.

63 THE HALL 63

Dolores closes the dressing room door. She is very upset. Ham Watson sits reading a racing form on the staircase.

HAM
Good evening, gorgeous.

DOLORES
Thought the exterminator been here las' week.

HAM
How come your other sister's so sweet, and you jus' as mean as you could be...

DOLORES
You tryin' to read upside down...

64 OUTSIDE IN THE CLUB 64

Satin walks to his table. Levi jumps up.

LEVI
This here is the girls' mother, Satin. Mrs. Anderson. This here is Satin Struthers.

MRS. WATERS
(wanting to be introduced)
Hemm... hem...

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED: 64

LEVI
Oh, and this here is Miz Waters.

MRS. WATERS
Heard a great deal about you, Mr. Struthers.

Satin is trapped. He sits down nodding a token acknowledgment in Effie's direction.

65 ON STAGE 65

The girls are announced. They have carefully arranged Sister's hair to cover the welt. The girls perform well, but we are aware of the tension amongst them.

66 DRESSING ROOM - LATER 66

The girls have just walked in. Levi comes to the door with Effie and Mrs. Waters.

THE GIRLS
Mama... We didn't know you were here... Why didn' you tell us?

LEVI
Come on, Miz Waters. Let's wait outside.

MRS. WATERS
But I wanna tell the girls how great they was.

LEVI
You tell 'em later.

He takes her outside.

SISTER
You see all them people goin' crazy for us, Mama?

EFFIE
(looks into Sister's face)
I seen them. I seen them.

She touches Sister's face lovingly. She brushes the hair aside and catches a glimpse of the welt. Sister walks away quickly and sits down at the makeup table.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: 66

SISTER
(nervously)
This theatrical makeup jus' terrible for my skin, Mama, havin' all kinds of problems with it.

SPARKLE
(tugging at Effie)
Was you proud, Mama? Was you proud?

EFFIE
I always been proud of my girls. Didn' need to sing in no club for me to be proud of you. If this is what you all wanna do, it's fine with me. I ain't said nothin' for the past few months. Jus' like I said to Miz' Gerber, "I'm gonna leave it up to the Lord." That's why I ain't said nothin' about the hours you all keepin' and no church on Sundays... and stayin' out all night. But now comin' here tonight like this... seein' you all, I feel there is somethin' I gotta say.

She moves to Sister now.

EFFIE
(continuing)
Sister... LaVerta... daughter. This man you runnin' with, he's no good.

SISTER
You ain't but seen him tonight, Mama.

EFFIE
I hear talk for a long time now.

SISTER
You been listenin' to that busy-body, Missus Waters.

EFFIE
I don't need to listen to nobody. I don't need to know that man any better than I do right now. I only gotta look at my daughter.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: (2) 66

SISTER
Mama, you don' understand. He's not what you think. He treat me fine. Give me a fur coat and --
(shows her wrist)
-- a diamond watch. He treat me real fine.

EFFIE
Fur coats and diamond watches ain't made nobody happy on this earth yet.

SISTER
Mama, you don' understand.

EFFIE
I done some gettin' around in my day. Oh, I know you wouldn't think it to look at me now, but I did. And I know as God is my witness, that that man ain't a good man. Jus' gonna' drag you down in the gutter with him.

Sister gets up now and faces Effie.

SISTER
The gutter? He's as "big time" as you can get.

EFFIE
I been livin' in Harlem all my life. 'Spect I know a rat when I sees one.
(looks at the other girls now)
I said my piece. I'm goin' home. You girls is on your own now, you don' need no Mama no more.

67 ANOTHER ANGLE 67

Effie goes out and down the hall as Sister and Dolores' eyes meet in the mirror.

68 INT. SATIN'S APARTMENT 68

flashy, overdone. There is a persistent KNOCKING at the front door as Satin, naked and grabbing a gun from under his pillow, pushes Sister, who is still asleep, aside and makes for the door. Cautiously, he peers through the peep hole.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: 68

SATIN
(through the door)
What do you want?

LEVI
I wanna talk to you, Satin.

SATIN
What about?

LEVI
It's important. Can I come in?

SATIN
Aw, shit.
(opens the door)
What you want this hour in the morning?

LEVI
It's almost noon.

SATIN
All right, come in.

Levi enters. Satin goes to the bedroom, walks inside, and as he closes the bedroom door, Levi catches a glimpse of Sister as she sleeps. The door opens again, and Satin comes out in a flashy robe. He lights a thin cigar as he closes the door again.

SATIN
(continuing)
What's up your ass?

LEVI
Satin, I been workin' for you a long time now.

SATIN
Few months.

LEVI
Yeah, and I been a real good worker, ain't I?

SATIN
No complaints so far.

LEVI
Well I want more responsibilities.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (2) 68

SATIN
What you talkin' about?

LEVI
I'm not makin' enough money.

SATIN
You doin' okay the way I see it.

LEVI
I got plans, plans for the future, and I need big dough. I'm ready, you know that, Satin, I'm ready.

SATIN
I'll say when you're ready. Go put on some coffee.

LEVI
Sure, Satin.

Satin goes back into the bedroom. Levi watches and catches one more glimpse of Sister just before the door slams.

69 INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY 69

Stix waits with Dolores and Sparkle and the PIANIST from the Shan Doo. They have been waiting for Sister for a half hour. Stix is very upset.

STIX
Where is she? Didn' you tell her we only got the place for an hour?

SPARKLE
She'll be here, Stix.

STIX
Can't understand it, work my ass off to get us this break, and she don' even show up.

PIANIST
Only got twenty more minutes.

STIX
(to Sparkle)
You say you call Satin's?

SPARKLE
Ain't no answer.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: 69

STIX
Goddamn her.

Suddenly the door to the studio opens and Satin enters with Sister on his arm. She wears a new white fur coat. They are both stoned.

STIX
(continuing)
Where you been? We only got twenty minutes left.

SISTER
I'm here, ain't I?

A SECRETARY and RECORD EXECUTIVE enter the studio now.

SECRETARY
(indicating Satin)
This is the gentleman.

RECORD EXECUTIVE
I'm sorry, sir, but you cannot park in front of the entrance like that. There are signs all over.

SATIN
Fuck off, Fatso.

RECORD EXECUTIVE
(getting angrier)
I'm terribly sorry, but you'll have to move your vehicle.

He puts his arm behind Satin to guide him toward the door. Satin violently overacts to this and pushes the man into a wall.

SATIN
Take your hands off me, mother fucker.

RECORD EXECUTIVE
(the last straw)
I'm sorry, Mr. Warren, but I'm going to have to ask you and your group to leave.

Stix rushes over to him.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (2) 69

STIX
Please, Mr. Bartholomew.

RECORD EXECUTIVE
No, I'm sorry, we can't tolerate such goings on here.

Satin and Sister leave grandly as Sparkle goes to Stix.

70 INT. ANDERSON GIRLS' BEDROOM - NIGHT 70

Dolores tiptoes into the bedroom where suddenly Sparkle, who seems to be asleep, turns a small bedside lamp on.

SPARKLE
Hi.

DOLORES
How come you ain't asleep?

SPARKLE
Took me half the night to calm Stix down. I never seen him so angry. Where you been so late?

Dolores puts down a book she is carrying and begins to undress.

DOLORES
Been talkin' to this guy.

SPARKLE
You got a boyfriend?

DOLORES
No, not like that. I met him at Sylvie Dupre's house.

SPARLKE
Miz' Waters say Sylvie Dupre is a communist.

DOLORES
She ain't no communist.

SPARKLE
So what's your boyfriend like?

Dolores gets in bed.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: 70

DOLORES
He ain't my boyfriend. I know this is gonna come as a shock to you, girl, but there's people in this world got other things on their mind besides fuckin' and singin'.

SPARKLE
Don' use that word in this house.

DOLORES
Singin' and singin' and workin' an' who livin' off it? You know who? That white assed honkey woman of Mr. Daniels, that's who. And now Stix wan' us to make records to put money in the pockets of more honkies.

She shuts off the lamp. The two girls lie down in the dark.

SPARKLE
Stix jus' tryin' to make things better for all of us.

DOLORES
There mus' be another way.

71 INT. SATIN'S LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT 71

Satin and Sister lie stoned out on the sofa watching the Late Late Show on television.

SATIN
You ain't thanked me for your new fur coat yet.

SISTER
(very sexy)
Sure I have. Thanked you every way I know how, baby.

SATIN
Wan' you to crawl for me.

SISTER
Wha?

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 71

SATIN
Wan' you to get down and crawl across the floor for me.

SISTER
You crazy?

SATIN
I said crawl.

SISTER
Satin?

He grabs her arm and makes her sit up.

SATIN
Crawl, you bitch.

SISTER
You jus' workin' yourself up.

SATIN
Crawl or I'll kill you.

He stands up and yanks her with him. Violently, he tries to toss her to the floor. She takes the lit cigarette in her hand and buries it in his forearm. He beats her mercilessly until he forces her to the floor.

SATIN
(continuing)
Now you crawl for me, you bitch.

We see the sick satisfaction on his sadistic face, as we HEAR Sister sobbing and the SOUND on the rug as she crawls.

72 INT. DRESSING ROOM, SHAN DOO - NIGHT 72

Sister sits at the makeup table. She is in very bad shape. She is very bruised and her hands are shaking. Dolores enters.

DOLORES
Heard the prettiest girl in Harlem used to sing here. Guess she moved on.

SISTER
Don' you start with me tonight.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: 72

DOLORES
Gonna let this man kill you?

SISTER
Nothin' that a little makeup can't cover. Sparkle went out to get me some...

DOLORES
(at her side now)
A little makeup and what else? What else pushin' into your face besides his fists?

SISTER
Get outta here.

DOLORES
No, not this time. If you too weak to take care of that bastard, then I will.

SISTER
Don' you dare. Stay outta things that don' concern you.

DOLORES
Everytime I see a human being can't take care of themself from now on it's my concern. And I'm lookin' at one right now.

The door opens and Sparkle enters, carrying a small package. Dolores grabs the package from Sparkle.

DOLORES
(continuing)
Let me see what kinda makeup you using these days.

Sister is on her feet and grabs for the package.

SISTER
Don't. Give me that.

The girls struggle and the package falls to the floor. The small glass vial breaks and white powder spills on the floor. Sister slowly sinks to the floor. With a shaky hand, she scoops the powder up from the floor, and, sniffing it, looks to her sisters.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: (2) 72

SISTER
(continuing; trying to smile)
Your sister can't fly on one wing.

Dolores has seen enough. She leaves the dressing room.

73 THE HALL 73

Dolores steps outside. Her mind is reeling. She looks over to where Ham sits on the staircase.

HAM
Hello, gorgeous.

DOLORES
You know, I been thinkin'.

HAM
I hear you always thinkin'.

DOLORES
I been thinkin' you an' me should get to know each other better.

HAM
Sounds like all that thinkin' is doin' you some good. Ain't I been tellin' you that all along?

DOLORES
I could learn a lot from a big time operator like you.

HAM
Now you talkin'. When do we start?

DOLORES
I mean you're an important man. Workin' so close with Satin and all. He mus' trust you with everything.

HAM
(proudly)
Everything. Say, baby, what are you doin' after the show?

DOLORES
Just as free as the breeze.

74 INT. CHEAP HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 74

In the darkened room, Dolores slips her coat over her naked body and goes to the door. Ham sits up in bed.

HAM
Where you going, baby?

DOLORES
Jus' down to the lobby to get some cigarettes, baby.

75 THE HOTEL HALL 75

Dolores closes the door to the room and wipes the taste of Ham off her mouth with her hand. She looks around. At the end of the long hall is a pay phone. Dolores speaks softly but precisely.

DOLORES
Tomorrow night... never mind who this is. Jus' pay attention to what I'm tellin' you. Big pickup four-thirty in the morning under the Manhattan Bridge. Man by the name of Satin Struthers.

76 EXT. MANHATTAN BRIDGE 76

TWO PLAINCLOTHESMEN wait in the dark, watching the deserted entrance to the bridge.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN #1
What time you got?

PLAINCLOTHESMAN #2
Almost five.

Suddenly, a lone figure appears near the bridge entrance. We can see by the hat it is Satin. He lights a long, narrow cigar. A fast car arrives now and, handing him a parcel, the car zooms onto the bridge.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN #1
That's it. Get to the car and tell them to pick up that car on the other side. I'll get this guy.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: 76

In the darkness, Satin makes his way to his car hidden near the bridge entrance. As he is about to open his car door, a voice and flashlight shoot out at him from the bushes.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN #1
(continuing)
Don't move a muscle, buddy.

Satin runs wildly now.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN #1
(continuing; pushing his way out of the bushes)
Halt or I'll shoot!

Satin runs blindly toward the water in an effort to throw the package in. The Plainclothesman FIRES. Satin is hit in the leg and falls. The Plainclothesmen reach him and shine their flashlights in his face. It is Levi.

77 INT. ANDERSON GIRLS' BEDROOM 77

Dolores looks out the window as she sees Stix and Sparkle head toward the building. She runs through the apartment and down the tenement stairs. She meets Sparkle on the second floor.

DOLORES
Did you see him?

SPARKLE
(sadly)
No, they wouldn't let me. He's shot in the leg. Stix got him a lawyer though. Oh, Dolores, I don't know what's gonna be this time. How could this happen to Levi?

Sparkle begins to cry. Dolores holds her close.

78 EXT. STREET - MINUTES LATER 78

Stix heads toward his building when suddenly a dark figure jumps out at him from an alley and, pinning Stix to the alley wall, holds a knife into his neck. It is Satin.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: 78

SATIN
You drop the dime on me, mother fucker?

STIX
You crazy, what you talkin' about?

SATIN
Somebody ratted on me to the "bulls", man. I think it was you, mother fucker.

STIX
You crazy, Levi Brown my bes' friend.

SATIN
Whoever blew the whistle thought they were gonna get me. I'm the only one knew Levi gonna make the pickup. I think it was you, mother fuck...

Stix makes his move now and brings his knee up into Satin's groin. They fight savagely now, no holds barred. At the end of the bloody battle, Stix sits on Satin's shoulders as Satin lies on the alley floor.

STIX
You losing your touch, Satin. You been beatin' up on women too long. You're all finished, you know that? Know what heppen to a man in your business when he can' even make a pickup without the cops? You responsible for that stuff they pick up on Levi, ain't you? Fellas you work for gonna break both your legs. You finished.
(leans down into Satin's snarling face now)
You gonna be where you belong. In the gutter... with the rest of the shit!

With this, Stix spits full force into Satin's face.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (2) 78

STIX
(continuing)
I didn't drop the dime on you.
But I wish I had.

Stix throws the knife down now and gets up. He takes one last contemptuous look at Satin, turns his back and walks out of the alley.

SATIN
You a dead man, Stix Warren.
You hear me? A dead man. Only
gonna keep you alive as long as
you keep my baby singin'. Soon
as you stop, I'm gonna kill you.

Stix is gone. He is shouting to the alley walls.

SATIN
(continuing)
You a dead man, Stix Warren. A
dead man.

He falls back down.

79 OMITTED 79

80 EXT. ANDERSON APARTMENT, HARLEM - NIGHT 80

Effie comes out of the subway and walks down the street.

81 INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN 81

Effie opens the front door. She walks into the kitchen and at first the house seems empty. Then she sees Dolores moving about the bedroom quickly.

EFFIE
Dolores, that you?

DOLORES
Yes.

EFFIE
Where's Sparkle?

DOLORES
I don' know.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: 81

EFFIE
What you doin' in there, Dolores?

The light goes off in the bedroom.

EFFIE
(continuing)
Dolores?

Suddenly Dolores walks out of the darkened bedroom. She carries a small beat-up suitcase.

EFFIE
(continuing)
Where you goin'?

DOLORES
(walking toward her down the hall)
I'm leavin', Mama.

EFFIE
You're leavin' for where?

DOLORES
I'm leavin' and goin' away.

EFFIE
What you mean?

Dolores reaches the kitchen now.

DOLORES
I can't live like this anymore. I've got to find another way.

EFFIE
Whatever troubles you got here goin' right with you in that suitcase.

DOLORES
Mama, you don' understand. You don't know what's happening to the Negro in this country.

EFFIE
What's happening to the Negro in this country that I don't know about?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (2) 81

DOLORES
Big changes. There's education like there never was before. People don' have to be slaves anymore to the white establishment, it can be whatever we want to make it. We don' have to live off what the white honkey throws our way. "Thank you, Massa", "Uncle Tomin'" their white ass workin' for chicken shit pay, shinin' shoes, drivin' their cars, washin' their floors, bein' their...
(she stops)

EFFIE
Go on, say it. Bein' their maid.

DOLORES
Yes, Mama, bein' their maid. I seen you ever since I was little gettin' up in the middle of the night, takin' the subway two hours. Ironin' for them, cookin' for them, washin' the shit outta their toilets. For what, Mama? Look around you, for what?

EFFIE
Kept us alive and together.

DOLORES
That's why I'm goin', Mama, to go where people won't settle, to go where this ain't enough. You don't know what's happenin' down south, Mama. Black people gettin' together like never before and gonna make the honkeys pay with their ass.

EFFIE
There's real hatred in you, Dolores. Always has been. Don' know where it comes from.

DOLORES
From livin' with the women in this house. Some day you'll understand. Goodbye, Mama.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (3) 81

Dolores leaves quickly. Effie stands alone in the kitchen for a few moments. Then slowly she moves to the window. Her eyes fill with tears as she watches Dolores disappear.

82 SHAN DOO CLUB - DAY 82

STIX
One week, Mr. Daniels.

MR. DANIELS
But, Stix, I've got to put another act in.

STIX
Jus' put someone in temporary. I know we can get it together in a week.

MR. DANIELS
Okay, one week.

83 EXT. STREET - DAY 83

Sparkle and Stix talk to Tune Ann Chambers.

TUNE ANN
I can't be no singer.

SPARKLE
Tune Ann, you're the bes' singer in church.

TUNE ANN
That's church, that ain't bein' on stage, in front of all them people... why... why... I'd shit my pants.

DISSOLVE TO:

84 MONTAGE 84

A sequence of Stix and Sparkle pulling Tune Ann together.

This involves trying to dress her and coiff her and teach her all of the sexy smooth movements that people have come to expect from "Sister and The Sisters".

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: 84

Although this is very hard work for Stix and Sparkle, there is a strong sense of them working together. They hug from time to time and seem very much a unit, and there are some funny moments; trying to push Tune Ann into a girdle, Tune Ann trying to imitate Sparkle's movements... The three work very hard. OVER this MONTAGE and not married to the picture is the stop and start rehearsing of Tune Ann singing. There is a lot of laughter mixed in with the singing.

The MONTAGE ENDS in a --

DISSOLVE TO:

85 INT. DRESSING ROOM SHAN DOO - SATURDAY NIGHT 85

Sparkle and Tune Ann get ready in the dressing room. The door flies open and Stix races in.

STIX
She here yet?

SPARKLE
No, you call the house?

STIX
The phone's been disconnected. I sent Ham over.

Sparkle fixes the sash on Tune Ann's red dress.

SPARKLE
She'll be here. Always has been before.

Stix races out of the room.

TUNE ANN
Spark... I am... I am...

SPARKLE
You are what?

TUNE ANN
I'm gonna shit my pants.

SPARKLE
Don' you dare.

86 THE BACK ENTRANCE 86

Stix paces nervously. The stage door opens. It is Ham.

HAM
No one home.

Mr. Daniels appears now from his office.

MR. DANIELS
Any sign of her yet?

STIX
She'll be here, Mr. Daniels, you know Sister. Put the comic on again, we'll do the last show.

87 INT. SHAN DOO - LATE THAT NIGHT 87

It is after closing, all the chairs are up on the tables, everyone is gone. Stix sits picking out a simple tune on the piano. Far behind him Sparkle sits on a chair with Tune Ann asleep on her shoulder.

Mr. Daniels comes out of his office and shuts off the light. He is accompanied by his white girl friend carrying her poodle. He walks over to the piano and he lays a check on top of it.

MR. DANIELS
I'd like to pay you for tonight anyway. I'm sorry, Stix. You are always welcome here. Any time. Good night.

SPARKLE
Good night, Mr. Daniels.

Stix cannot look at Daniels. He just sits and picks at the piano. Daniels and his girl friend leave. Stix sits for a moment. Then suddenly all the pain and frustration and madness that he feels sweeps over him. With violent force he starts banging the keys of the piano. Savagely he pounds harder and harder the discordant sound transmitting his anger. Sparkle runs to him.

SPARKLE
Stix... don't... don't...

88 INT. STAIRCASE - ANDERSON TENEMENT 88

Stix races up the stairs with Sparkle running after him.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: 88

SPARKLE
Stix, don't.

STIX
I'm through, finished.

SPARKLE
No, wait, listen.

STIX
I'm finished. I worked my ass off and nobody gives a goddamn. Dolores go off without even tellin' me, and Sister, what'd I ever do to her but make her something special? Well, I'm through I tell you.

Savagely he kicks the door to the roof open. He races out onto the roof where it is pouring rain.

SPARKLE
(racing out after him)
Stix, we can start again.

STIX
Yeah, but not around here. I'm going upstate.

SPARKLE
Upstate?

STIX
Friend of mine been workin' there in construction makin' five, ten dollars an hour he tell me.

SPARKLE
But what about us?

STIX
You come with me.

SPARKLE
I can't leave, Stix. What's Mama gonna do now Dolores is gone? And what about Sister?

STIX
(blood in his eyes)
What about her?

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: (2) 88

SPARKLE
I'm the only one care about her any more.

STIX
Then you stay.

SPARKLE
(horror)
Stix, what do you mean?

STIX
I'm goin'. You free to come along or stay.

SPARKLE
Don' make me choose between my Sister and you, Stix, don' make me choose.

STIX
Ain't makin' you do nothin'.

He flings open the door of his roof now.

SPARKLE
(screaming)
Stix, don't leave me.

STIX
I gotta go. If I stay here I'm gonna kill somebody.

He leaves the roof now. Sparkle stands in the rain sobbing.

SPARKLE
Stix... Stix...

89 INT. STIX APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER 89

Stix' grandmother sits in her chair dozing. The apartment is in better shape since Stix has been bringing home more money. The door flies open and Stix, soaking wet, rushes in.

GRAN
You're soakin' wet, "Big Boy".

STIX
(rusing into the tiny bedroom)
I'm goin', Gran.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: 89

With great effort Stix' grandmother gets out of her chair and finds a towel for Stix.

GRAN
Goin' where?

Stix throws some personal things in a small canvas bag with a zipper.

STIX
Upstate, gonna work construction. Job I tol' you about Davey White's cousin got. Make a lot of money, Gran.

GRAN
But what about your music?

STIX
(savagely)
I'm through with music. Ain't never even wanta hear no music ever again.

He comes out of the bedroom now and hands his grandmother the check from Daniels.

STIX
(continuing)
Here's a check, Gran, I'll send you more money every week. You be okay?

GRAN
(drying his head with the towel)
Been takin' care of myself a long time before you come along.

STIX
(hugging her intensely)
Goodbye, Gran.

GRAN
Goodbye, "Big Boy". God bless you. Take good care of yourself.

Quickly he goes to the door.

GRAN
(continuing)
You forgot something, "Big Boy".

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (2) 89

Stix with the door open now turns around. Gran holds up his harmonica.

STIX
No, I didn't.

90 EXT. THE ROOF 90

Sparkle leans against the door of the roof. The rain continues to pound down on her as she cries uncontrollably.

91 INT. LEVI'S CELL - NIGHT 91

It is late, almost "Lights Out". Levi sits on his bed finishing reading a letter.

92 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY 92

Stix works hard. He is very involved in his work.

93 EXT. ROOF - DAY 93

Sparkle takes some clothes down from a line on the roof. Painfully she passes the spot where she and Stix made love.

94 EXT. HARLEM STREET - NIGHT 94

Sparkle comes out of the subway and walks to the tenement stairs. As she starts to climb them she HEARS a NOISE.

SPARKLE
Who's that?

Gradually from the shadows underneath the staircase a figure emerges. It is Sister. She is gaunt and haggard.

SISTER
Hi, Spark... it's me, Sister.

SPARKLE
Sister, what you doin' down there?

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: 94

SISTER
Jus' waitin' on you to get home.

Sparkle goes down a few steps.

SPARKLE
Are you okay?

SISTER
Oh, everything jus' fine. Satin outta the hospital and we back together again.

Sparkle is close to Sister now. As Sister steps out of the shadows she can see how battered and bruised she is. Sparkle recognizes the familiar marks of Satin's beatings.

SPARKLE
Come upstairs.

SISTER
(terror)
No... no...

SPARKLE
Mama ain't there.

SISTER
No, I gotta get back to Satin, he don't like me to be gone too long. He can' get aroun' with his legs all busted up an' all.
(beat)
Spark, I was kinda hopin' you know jus' till Satin back up and aroun' if you could maybe lay some dough on us... I'll pay you back real soon... You know ol' Sister.
(smiles weakly)

Sparkle starts to open her purse.

SPARKLE
I can't give you money 'cause I know what it's for.

SISTER
Oh, it ain't what you think at all. I need jus' a few buck to get myself together... get my hair fixed...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: (2) 94

SISTER (cont'd)
... fill up the grocery cupboard
... you know... I wouldn't lie
to you, Sugar.

SPARKLE
(realizes Sister
is lost)
... I know.

Slowly Sparkle opens her bag and hands Sister some money. They both know what it is for.

SISTER
Thank you, honey. I'll see
you real soon.

SPARKLE
Yeah.

Sister goes off as Sparkle watches helplessly.

95 INT. A LOW CLUB IN HARLEM - DAWN 95

In a low, after hours club, frequented by jazz musicians and drug addicts, an OLD BLACK MAN plays a blues on upright piano. There is very little energy in the dark room as most of the people still there are nodding out. As the Old Man plays we are aware of someone in the shadow leaning against the side of the piano. She leans forward a bit and the light from a bare bulb catches part of her bruised face. It is Sister. She is very wasted, almost in another world. There is lipstick all over her teeth. The old pianist follows her patiently as she sings a painful and desperate blues in what is left of her voice.

In the shadows of another corner, a wasted man almost as stoned as Sister sits with his crutches, his mangled legs underneath him. It is Satin. Sister finishes the song on a high, painful wailing note. This IMAGE and SOUND DISSOLVE TO a WAILING police ambulance racing through Harlem.

95A SCENE 95A

As Sister's voice fades into the siren and her image fades under the racing ambulance, another image appears over the ambulance, it is Sparkle's pained face as she sings "Precious Lord".

95B C.U. STIX - LISTENS TO SONG 95B

The ambulance fades and Sparkle's image takes over the screen. She sings with all the pain and suffering she feels as she joins the choir in their church. The entire neighborhood congregation is there. Effie stands between Mrs. Waters and another friend. Tune Ann sings next to Sparkle with tears in her eyes and as the SHOT WIDENS we see the open coffin where Sister lies. Her pain is over.

96 INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY 96

It is after the funeral. Mrs. Waters sits drinking whiskey at the kitchen table with some of her cronies. Effie, thankful for the activity to keep busy makes coffee.

MRS. WATERS
(to the woman next to her as she downs another shot of whiskey)
I knew she'd come to no good, sat right at this table...

The other women at the table keep her from going any further. There is a KNOCK at the door.

MRS. WATERS
(continuing)
Come in.

The door opens, it is Stix. The group is shocked.

STIX
I... I'm so sorry to hear 'bout Sister. Woulda been to the funeral but I jus' got back.

EFFIE
I understand, Stix. Would you like some coffee?

STIX
I was wonderin'... I was hopin'...

EFFIE
Sparkle is in the bedroom.

97 THE HALLWAY 97

The CAMERA FOLLOWS Stix down the long hall.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: 97

Soon we can see Sparkle. She sits on her bed in a black dress, her head down. Stix comes closer. Sparkle raises her head. She stares at him for a long time.

SPARKLE
What do you want?

STIX
I'm lookin' for a girl singer.

SPARKLE
This family is fresh out.

STIX
Sparkle...

SPARKLE
When did you get back?

STIX
A few days ago.

SPARKLE
A few days ago? I musta been out when you called.

STIX
Listen, Sparkle, I know how you feel.

SPARKLE
(bitterly)
You do? That's funny two brains in this room thinkin' for one person. Since when you know how anybody feel about anything, 'cept yourself, Mr. Stix Warren?

STIX
We got a lot to talk over but we can't talk it over unless you give me a chance.

Sparkle rises now and faces him.

SPARKLE
If you're lookin' for a chance you come to the wrong address. You wanna hear somethin' funny? When you first left I didn' think I would be able to live without you.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2) 97

SPARKLE (cont'd)
Used to sit here in this room and say, "Will I get through this second?" Can you imagine a person so unhappy they don' know if they gonna live through the next second?

Stix tries to touch her. Tears and rage overtake her now.

SPARKLE
(continuing)
Well, I got through the seconds and the minutes and the days and the weeks and the months and now I'm doin' jus' fine without you.

She turns her back on him.

SPARKLE
(continuing)
Jus' fine.

STIX
No matter what you think of me, I come back 'cause I want you to sing. One of the reasons I been so busy since I got back is trying to line up my ol' contacts and get some new ones together.

SPARKLE
You always so good at business, business, business.

STIX
It was always for you, too. It is now. Sparkle, I want you to sing.

She turns on him now.

SPARKLE
And what I got to sing about?

STIX
Sparkle, what happened to your sister happened to your sister, not you. You got your life. Don' bury yourself with your sister.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (3) 97

SPARKLE
(the last straw)
Get out... get outta here. Nobody ever understood Sister 'cept me. Don' you ever use her name again. Get out... Get out.

She pushes him out and slams the bedroom door. Embarrassed he stands in the hall helplessly listening to Sparkle crying behind the closed door. Slowly he turns and walks down the hall.

98 INT. VISITING ROOM, JAIL - LATE AFTERNOON 98

The huge room is empty except for two lonely figures sitting across from each other in the fading light. Sparkle has just told Levi the tragic news.

98A LEVI 98A

He is glazed, slowly he gets up and like a sleepwalker leaves the room as Sparkle watches painfully.

98B INT. LEVI'S CELL 98B

Slowly he enters and walking over to his bunk, takes down the photograph of Sister hanging on his wall.

99 EXT. ANDERSON STREET - NIGHT 99

Effie and Sparkle walk together carrying groceries.

EFFIE
I never seen you so quiet, ain't heard a peep out of you all day.

SPARKLE
Jus' thinkin' that's all, Mama.

EFFIE
Heard Stix put his grandmother in a fine home where she be takin' care of real good.

SPARKLE
That's nice.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED: 99

EFFIE
Some folks thinks he's a fine boy.

Beat. No response from Sparkle.

EFFIE
(continuing)
I'm one of them.

SPARKLE
Mama, do we have to talk about this again?

EFFIE
Honey, it ain't like you bein' so unfair. I told you a long time ago. A man gotta do what he gotta do. I know he run off and leave you, but he come back, didn' he?

SPARKLE
Jus' to make records.

EFFIE
Stix right to want you to sing. I hear you in church singin' for Sister and it like to break my heart the glory of what God give you.

SPARKLE
Don' feel like singin'.

EFFIE
Jus' go see him so you give yourself a chance to change your mind. Promise you'll think about it. Come on, Spark, tell Mama you'll think about it.

Sparkle does not respond. The two women walk on in silence.

100 INT. RECORDING STUDIO - STIX AND ENGINEER - NIGHT 100

cutting a record. Stix looks up and sees Sparkle. She stares back at him. Stix leaves the recording room and makes his way through the series of glass rooms to Sparkle.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED: 100

They are silent at first. Then slowly they begin to talk. We cannot hear them, we just HEAR the song. We can see their faces though, and we can see they are discussing their past and future. Stix puts his arm around Sparkle.

101 INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - NIGHT 101

After rehearsing for several hours, Stix and Sparkle sit on a piano bench drinking coffee out of paper cups.

STIX
How do you feel?

SPARKLE
Tired.

STIX
How the singing feel?

SPARKLE
Okay.

STIX
I think you ready to make a record.

SPARKLE
A demo?

STIX
No, I mean a real record. The finished product, back up singer, big orchestra, everything.

SPARKLE
That makes me nervous.

STIX
You nervous? You know how much money I gotta come up with for that?

SPARKLE
How much?

STIX
Ten... maybe fifteen thousand dollars.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: 101

SPARKLE
Only one man I know got that kinda money.

STIX
You know a man with that kinda money?

102 INT. LOU G. SIEGEL'S KOSHER RESTAURANT - DAY 102

Moe Gerber sits at a table with a napkin under his chin eating a big bowl of matzoh ball soup and reading the stock market page. Stix enters the restaurant. He is nervous. He is dressed in his best and full of energy. He looks around and spotting Moe, approaches the table.

STIX
Mr. Gerber.

MOE
Sit down, sit down.

Moe finishes reading while Stix sits.

MOE
(continuing)
You want some soup?

STIX
No thanks.

MOE
You ever had matzoh ball soup?

STIX
No, I can't say that I have.

MOE
I knew you never had it 'cause if you ever had it you could never say "no".
(to a waiter)
Hymie, another bowl of soup.

STIX
Heard a lot of nice things about you from Sparkle.

MOE
And I heard a lot of nice things about you from Effie. Now that that's out of the way, how much money you want?

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 102

STIX
Ten thousand dollars.

MOE
What are you putting up as collateral?

The Waiter brings the bowl of soup and puts it in front of Stix.

STIX
My word that I'll pay you back with any interest you name.

MOE
Nobody's gonna give you any money with that kind of collateral.

STIX
Listen, Mr. Gerber, Sparkle got more talent than anybody I ever know. She gonna make it big and I'll find somebody someplace who'll give me the money.

Stix stands up.

MOE
Sit down, sit down, all I said was you ain't gonna get the money from anybody. I'm gonna get the money.

STIX
What?

MOE
This is the deal. I'll borrow the money from my business associates and you will pay me very handsomely for the use of that money. You understand.

STIX
(all smiles now)
Yes, sir.

MOE
Eat your soup.

103 INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT 103

Sparkle and Stix are cutting their first record. They have been trying unsuccessfully for hours. There is a full orchestra and back up singers led by Tune Ann. Sparkle is very tense and tight. It is obvious Stix is not getting the sound he wants and this is making Sparkle even more nervous. He is talking to Sparkle over in a corner. He finishes and turns back to the group.

STIX
Okay... Okay one more time.
Let's try to cut one again.

Stix goes to the control booth. Sparkle nervously takes her position at the microphone. Stix cues them and the orchestra begins. Tune Ann and the girls begin the introduction to "You're All I Need To Get By". Stix cues Sparkle, she begins, she is tired and nervous, her singing is melodic but not special.

STIX
(over the P.A.
ssystem)
Hold it... hold it...

The orchestra and Tune Ann and the girls stop again. Sparkle knows it's her fault. She is at the breaking point. Stix comes from out of the control room and walks over to her.

SPARKLE
I just don' think I can do this.

STIX
(tenderly)
Sure you can. You did it jus'
fine yesterday in rehearsal.

This gives him an idea.

STIX
(continuing)
Okay everybody jus' relax.

Tune Ann takes off her shoes. Two of the orchestra members go back to their card game.

STIX
(continuing; to
the pianist)
Jess, let's run through it once
on the piano.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: 103

The pianist gives the introduction. This seems ridiculous to Sparkle who is ready to quit. Seeing her hesitation Stix sings the first line. He does it easy and soulfully. He goes on. Sparkle joins in now, following each phrase a little behind him. They are singing great together now. Not like a record but like two people who can express their love for one another through this song. Sparkle feels Stix' warmth, her voice builds. Some of the other musicians join in now. What is happening between Stix and Sparkle is thrilling. They build together to the finish now. They are singing face to face across the piano, their eyes shining. Tune Ann is very moved. They finish and stand there smiling at each other.

STIX
All right let's cut it.

104 SCENE 104

Now we HEAR the finished record of Sparkle and Tune Ann and the girls singing "You're All I Need To Get By." As the record begins we DISSOLVE TO a MONTAGE of Stix hustling the finished record. Shimmy Dodson's store putting a poster up in the window. The poster is a picture of Sparkle and the title of the song. The song and MONTAGE END in a DISSOLVE TO Sparkle asleep in her bedroom.

105 SCENE 105

There is a loud POUNDING down at the end of the hall at the front door. Sparkle jumps up out of a deep sleep.

SPARKLE
Mama?

Effie comes out into the hall pulling on her bathrobe.

EFFIE
What in God's name?

Sparkle jumps out of bed and runs down the hall as Effie approaches the front door.

SPARKLE
Mama, be careful, wait.

Sparkle reaches the door now.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED: 105

SPARKLE
(continuing)
Who is it?

STIX
Santa Claus.

SPARKLE
Stix?

STIX
Open this door before I break it down.

Sparkle opens the door. Stix stands there with a strange look on his face.

SPARKLE
Are you drunk?

STIX
Stinking drunk.

He comes inside now waving a copy of Cash Box.

STIX
(continuing)
We made the charts.

SPARKLE
What?

STIX
We made the charts. We're number thirty-seven and climbing fast. We made the charts.

He hands the magazine to Sparkle and dances Effie around the kitchen. Sparkle looks at the magazine, she can't believe it. She shows it to Effie. Now Stix takes Sparkle in his arms and whirls her around the kitchen and down the hall.

DISSOLVE TO:

106 OMITTED 106

106A INT. JAIL - A SMALL RADIO 106A

in Levi's prison cell. He sits at his small table thrilling to the SOUND of Sparkle's voice. There are texts books open in front of him and loose leaf note-books spread out on his bunk.

(CONTINUED)

106A CONTINUED: 106A

It is obvious that Levi is studying and learning. The Jailer, making his rounds, pauses by Levi's cell.

LEVI
That's my friend, Sparkle.

DISSOLVE TO:

107 OMITTED 107

108 EXT. A PRIVATE REST HOME - DAY 108

Stix and Sparkle enter and walk down the hall with a NURSE.

STIX
How is she today?

NURSE
She's always the same now, Mr. Warren.

They follow the Nurse through a doorway and into a sunny glass-enclosed Victorian porch where Stix' grandmother sits in a wheel chair, a blanket over her legs.

NURSE
(continuing; leaning over Gran)
Mrs. Warren, your grandson is here to see you again.

Gran is so old and senile she has no connection with the real world. The Nurse looks at Sparkle. Her expression conveys the hopelessness of the situation and her sympathy for Stix. Stix squats down in front of Gran taking her hand in his.

STIX
How you doin', Gran?... They treatin' you nice here?... Not like that other place is it?

Gran makes no response. Sparkle takes a seat in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED: 108

STIX
(continuing)
Got a hit record, Gran, you know who's singin', little Sparkle, remember?... We got a hit record.

He cannot bear that she doesn't recognize him. He grabs her hand to his face.

STIX
(continuing)
Gran, jus' know it's me for a minute... It's your "Big Boy".

Slowly Gran stirs and then for a second seems to gain some grasp of reality.

GRAN
... came up...

STIX
What... what you say, Gran?

GRAN
(very small voice)
Came up from Georgia once and said...

STIX
(excited, hopeful)
That's right, Gran, you're from Georgia.

She is gone again. She has slipped back to her dream world.

STIX
(continuing)
Look, Gran, I brought you something.
(reaches for his wallet)
'Member I promised you money and jewels and everything.

He takes out a lot of money and spreads it on her lap.

STIX
(continuing)
Look, Gran, look. It's all for you.

It means nothing to her. The money slides onto the painted floor. Stix can't bear it. Sparkle rises now and walks toward him slowly.

109 INT. MOE GERBER'S LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - DAY 109

The car is parked in front of Lou G. Siegel's restaurant. In the front seat Stix counts out money to Moe Gerber. Stix finishes.

STIX
There it is all back and sixteen percent interest. How's that for a businessman?

MOE
You should be real proud of yourself, Stix.

STIX
I am and I'm real proud of you for takin' a chance on us.

MOE
Stix, I'd like to talk over something with you... kind of what I'd call a sticky situation.

STIX
My turn to help you.

MOE
I'm real glad you see it that way, Stix. You see the business associates I borrowed the money from, well, they're very quick to recognize a good business investment when they see one. And you're doing very well.

STIX
They want more interest on their money?

MOE
No, it's not like that. They would like you to keep their money.

STIX
Keep their money?

MOE
Keep their money and consider it as an investment in the future.

STIX
In the future of what?

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: 109

MOE
Sparkle. You see her havin' a big hit record right off and being young, they feel with the record business growing the way it is and you know... Vegas... TV...

STIX
Wait a second. You mean to tell me that for a measly ten thousand dollars they want to take profits from Sparkle and me?

MOE
Now don't get excited.

STIX
Nothin' doin', I made a deal with you and I paid you back every cent plus the sixteen per cent you asked for. Our business is finished.

Stix starts to leave the car.

MOE
It's not as simple as that, Stix.

STIX
A deal is a deal.

MOE
Listen, you weren't born yesterday. I didn't just walk up to some nice banker and ask for ten thousand dollars. You been around. You know what we're dealing with here.

STIX
You're a nice man, Mr. Gerber, and I'm glad to do business with you. But who you do business with is your business.

Stix leaves the car and slams the door. Moe is upset. Two men sit in a black car across the street. They both look to Moe. Moe shakes his head negatively.

110 INT. STAGE - CARNEGIE HALL 110

Sparkle walks to center of empty stage.

SPARKLE
I can't do it. I can't do it. I'm not ready yet. I don't know if I ever will be.

STIX
Okay, okay.

SPARKLE
I'm the one who's gotta get up in front of all those people and make a fool out of myself.

STIX
You're not gonna make a fool outta yourself. I'm here to help you and make sure you get whatever you need.

His words inflame her even more. She explodes bigger now with tears and rage.

SPARKLE
(bitterly)
You don' know what I need... you never have... I need... I need love. And you... you don't know how to love, Stix. I've loved you all my life... All my life there's never been anyone but you. And the only thing I ever got from you was sing this and "sing that". You don' know what I need or anything else about me.

STIX
I know you're tired and I know you're nervous. But since you brought the subject up, you might as well know right here and now. I've loved you the only way I know how. Oh, I know it ain't like some people got but that ain't us. We made love, put the love in our music, and the music gave the love right back to us now. If you wanted a house in the country with a dog and a canary you shoulda found some other guy.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: 110

STIX (cont'd)
I've given you all I have, Sparkle. If you think you're not gettin' somethin' you're wrong. I ain't got nothin' else. I've loved you the only way I know how.

111 OMITTED 111

112 INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN - NIGHT 112

Effie packs a large cardboard carton in the kitchen. There is a KNOCK at the door.

EFFIE
Who is it?

LEE (o.s.)
Lee Gerber.

Surprised, Effie goes to the door and opens it.

EFFIE
Miz Gerber, what you doin' all the way up here?

LEE
May I come in, Effie?

EFFIE
Of course. Excuse all this mess. We movin' next month. Stix found us a real nice new apartment.

LEE
I'm sorry to come up like this, unexpected, but I have to talk to you, Effie.

EFFIE
I'm glad to have you in my house. Let me take your coat. Can I fix you a cup of coffee, Miz Gerber?

LEE
Don't you think it's about time you started calling me Lee.

113 BACK STAGE - CARNEGIE HALL DAY 113

Stix hangs up phone. Effie enters.

STIX
Effie, what a surprise.

They pause. Stix is not sure why Effie is there. Effie tries to collect her thoughts.

STIX
(continuing)
Would you like a cup of coffee?

EFFIE
Oh, no thank you.

Another awkward pause.

EFFIE
(continuing)
Stix, I known you almos' all your life.

STIX
You sure been good to me, Effie.

EFFIE
Wasn't hard bein' nice to such a fine boy like yourself.

STIX
(laughs)
Go on now.

EFFIE
Miz Gerber come to see me, Stix. She's a real fine woman. She's always been good to me and mine, so I feel about Miz Gerber a lot like I feel about you. She's been through a lot lately 'cause she found out all very serious things about Mr. Gerber's business affairs and the people he's mixed up with. Stix, she ask me to come and talk to you 'cause she is scared. She say those men is out to get you unless you do what they want.

STIX
(smiles now)
Don' you think ol' Stix can take care of himself?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED: 113

STIX (cont'd)
Remember they dealin' with a boy from Harlem, honey.

EFFIE
But, Stix... I...

STIX
Why you worryin' your pretty head about all this nonsense for anyway? All you should be worryin' about is what you're gonna wear to the concert. You need money for a new dress?

EFFIE
No, thank you, Stix. But Miz Gerber say...

STIX
Miz Gerber don't know everything. Now I got it all under control.

EFFIE
(hesitant)
Well, if you say so.

114 EXT. CARNEGIE HALL - LONG SHOT 114

Stix in front of the hall looking at posters. Watching from a black car are the two men we saw Moe nod to in front of Lou G. Seigel's.

115 thru 117 OMITTED 115 thru 117

118 SPARKLE'S DRESSING ROOM 118

Effie and Tune Ann help Sparkle to get ready. Sparkle wears a long red dress and looks really beautiful. Tune Ann wears a long white dress and Effie looks like the mother of the bride.

SPARKLE
Where could Stix be?

EFFIE
Oh, you know Stix, he's out there in the orchestra pit tellin' the trumpet player how to blow... Or who knows maybe he's seatin' some people.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: 118

TUNE ANN
Or maybe sellin' tickets at the box office.

She laughs.

EFFIE
That's one thing he ain't doin' 'cause it's all sold out.

SPARKLE
How's your pants, Tune Ann.

TUNE ANN
Ask me in an hour.

There's a KNOCK on the door. It opens and the STAGE MANAGER pokes his head in.

STAGE MANAGER
We're gonna start in a few minutes.

He closes the door.

TUNE ANN
I better see if the other girls is ready.

She runs out.

SPARKLE
Mama, leave me alone for a second.

EFFIE
Sure, honey. I'll be right outside.

SPARKLE
See if you can find Stix, will you, Mama?

119 BACKSTAGE 119

Effie walks up to the GUARD at the Stage Door.

EFFIE
Mr. Stix Warren come in yet?

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED: 119

GUARD
(looking through the list)
No "Warren", but he might have come through the other side. The Recital Hall side.

EFFIE
Oh.

Effie looks through the hole in the curtain.

120 HER POV 120

Carnegie Hall. The house is packed. She watches as Mrs. Waters and several black ladies from Effie's neighborhood take their seats. They are all wearing big hats. In another row, distinguished Mr. Daniels sits with a new white girl friend. Effie looks to the orchestra pit. Stix isn't there. The lights DIM.

121 OMITTED 121

122 THE THEATER 122

The lights go on on the stage and the audience applauds. The CONDUCTOR gives the downbeat. There is a big fanfare. The Black D.J. steps out. He is a big favorite with the audience.

BLACK D.J.
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to...
(pauses dramatically)
RAY CHARLES AT CARNEGIE HALL!!!

CHEERS, APPLAUSE and WHISTLING.

123 THE WINGS 123

Tune Ann and the other two girls in white adjust themselves as Sparkle joins them.

SPARKLE
You seen Mama?

TUNE ANN
She over on the other side.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: 123

SPARKLE
She find Stix?

TUNE ANN
She say somethin' about him bein' down in the pit.

She looks down to the pit but the stage lights blind her. The Black D.J. has just finished a joke and the audience is still laughing.

BLACK D.J.
But you all come here to hear some music, didn't you?

CHEERS.

BLACK D.J.
(continuing)
Well, we got it. And to start off the program, a great favorite of Ray's. Now you've all heard her, 'cause she got the number one record in the country. Now I want you to meet her, and let me tell you, they don't call her Sparkle for nothin'. Ladies and gentlemen, Sparkle Anderson and the Soul Ladies.

CHEERS and APPLAUSE from the audience. The orchestra begins the introduction to "You're All I Need To Get By".

124 EXT. DARKENED ROAD - NIGHT 124

A dark car speeds through the night.

125 INT. CARNEGIE HALL 125

Tune Ann and the Girls take their places at their microphones and begin the introduction. Big APPLAUSE. Sparkle makes her entrance now singing into a hand-held microphone. The audience loves it.

126 EXT. DARKENED BACK ROAD - NIGHT 126

The car continues to speed along.

127 INT. CARNEGIE HALL 127

Sparkle continues her song. She is radiant and perfect as she moves across the stage in her red dress. From the wings we can see Effie watching with pride and love.

128 EXT. DARK ROAD 128

The car careens and continues to speed.

129 INT. CARNEGIE HALL 129

Effie watches from the wings as Sparkle continues to sing. She holds her hand to her pounding heart. Far behind her we see the Stage Door open and Lee Gerber enters. Lee's face is ashen as she walks toward Effie slowly. Unaware of Lee's entrance Effie continues to watch the stage. Then she becomes aware of her presence. She turns, sees it is Lee and starts to smile, then she sees the expression on Lee's face. On stage Sparkle continues her song.

130 EXT. BACK ROAD 130

The dark car continues to speed and as it careens around a curve in the road a body is thrown from the back seat as the car speeds off into the darkness. Slowly the CAMERA ZOOMS INTO the dark shape. It is Stix, he is dead.

131 INT. CARNEGIE HALL 131

Sparkle and the girls have just finished the last note and the crowd is going wild.

132 BACKSTAGE 132

Through the noise of the APPLAUSE and the CHEERS, Lee tells Effie the tragic news. We cannot hear them but we only have to see Effie's reaction to know what Lee is telling her. Effie collapses in tears against Lee. The crowd CHEERS. Sparkle moves to the center of the stage and puts her microphone on its stand...

SPARKLE
Thank you, you're all makin' us feel real good up here.

APPLAUSE and LAUGHTER.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED: 132

SPARKLE
(continuing)
My friends and I want to sing a song for you now that goes back with me a long time. Don't it, Tune Ann?

TUNE ANN
(scared to death)
Uh huh.

SPARKLE
Tune Ann's a little nervous tonight, folks.

LAUGHTER.

133 LEE AND EFFIE 133

Lee has put Effie in a chair. She kneels in front of her and tries to console her.

134 SPARKLE 134

waits for the laughter to stop and then moves to the microphone.

SPARKLE
I'd like to sing this song for my sister.

Tune Ann is very moved.

SPARKLE
(continuing)
No... I'd like to sing this song for all my sisters.

Audience APPLAUSE.

SPARKLE
(continuing)
... Oh, and for Stix, he's out there somewhere.

135 THREE QUICK CUTS 135

A) The orchestra pit, no Stix.

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED: 135

B) The control room, no Stix.

C) The lobby, no Stix.

SPARKLE
(continuing)
I hope they can all hear me.

The introduction begins to "I CAN'T GIVE BACK THE LOVE I FEEL FOR YOU". We have heard this song many times before. But never like this. She brings to it now all the memories the song holds for her. It is beautiful. The audience melts. Effie looks up now and out onto the stage. No matter how wonderful this moment is for Sparkle, Effie knows she will have to tell her tragic news later.

136 INT. TENEMENT STAIRS - SUNDAY MORNING 136

We are on Sparkle's feet as she slowly walks down the wooden steps. It is the same way we saw her at the beginning of the movie but now they are the feet of a woman. Levi waits at the bottom.

We TRAVEL THEM until they walk out into the sunlight.

137 OMITTED 137

138 INT. THE CHURCH 138

The sermon is in progress. The choir is in its place. Sparkle enters through the back of the church. Slowly she walks to her place in the choir. The same place we have seen her so many times. The sermon ends. The simple organ swells.

SPARKLE AND CHOIR
"PRECIOUS LORD, TAKE MY HAND,
LEAD ME ON, MAKE ME STAND,"

She sings her whole life into the hymn. She tries to lift out of her heartbreak and sadness as she asks God for help.

SPARKLE AND CHOIR
(continuing)
"I GET TIRED, I GET WEAK AND WAN,
HEAR MY CRY, HEAR MY CALL,"

139 and 140 OMITTED

141 CLOSEUP - LEVI

watching Sparkle.

142 SPARKLE

It is a sign, somewhere she will find the strength to go on. The choir voices raise in beautiful harmony. Sparkle's rises far higher than the others and carries us upward.

SPARKLE
"TAKE MY HAND, PRECIOUS LORD,
LEAD ME ON."

FADE OUT.

THE END